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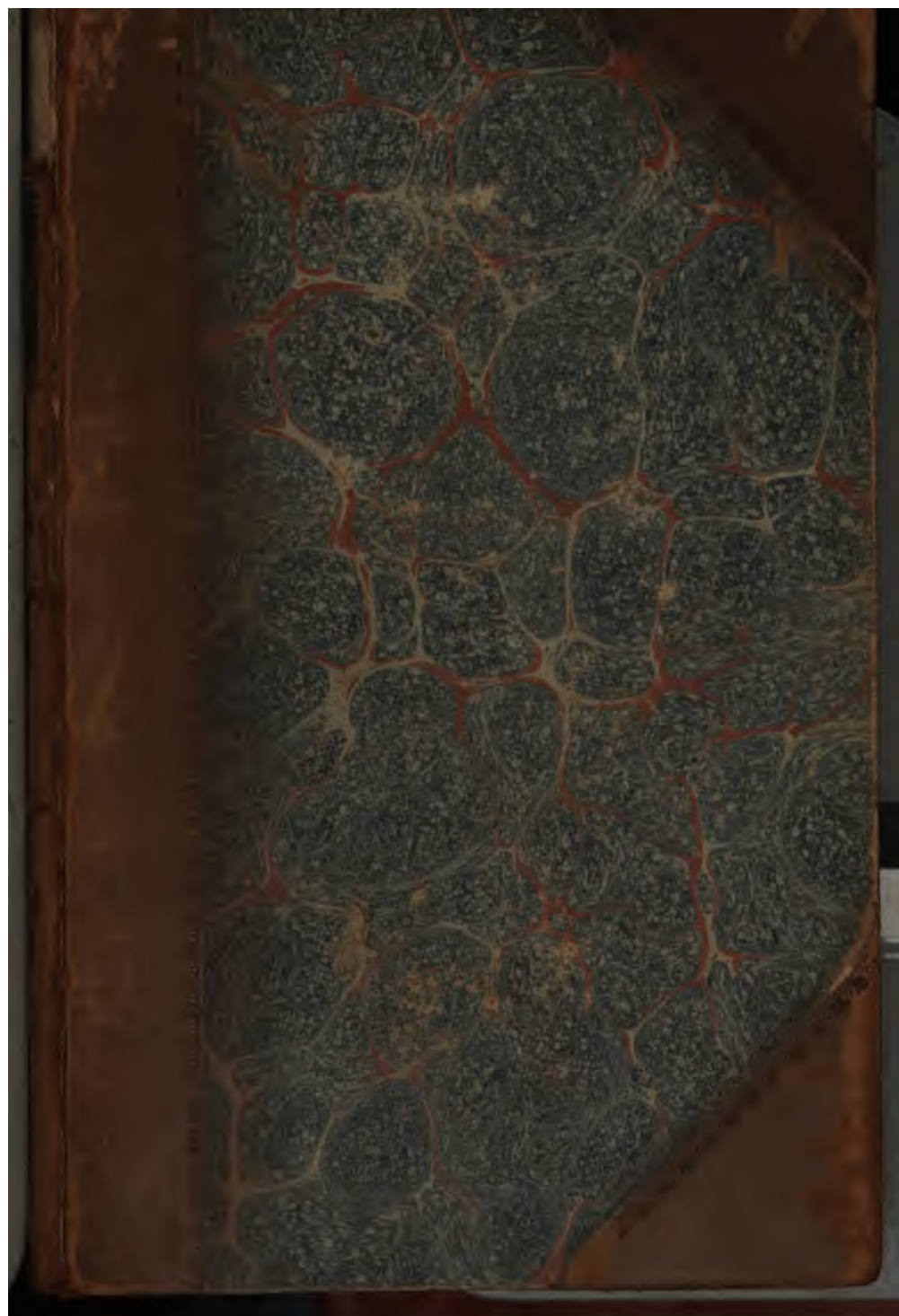
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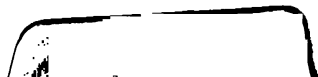
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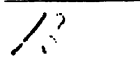


EVENINGS ABROAD.

EVENINGS ABROAD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“SKETCHES OF CORFÙ.”



. — Adieu !
Think on thy *Proteus*, when thou, haply, seest
Some rare note-worthy object in thy travel.
SHAKESPEARE.



SMITH, ELDER AND CO., CORNHILL,

BOOKSELLERS TO THEIR MAJESTIES.

1836.

360.

LONDON:
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DEDICATION.

MOTHER ! dear mother ! in the distant lands,
Where Alpine mountains seem to touch the sky,
Where crystal rivers flow o'er golden sands,
And the soft breeze that murmurs idling by
Is sweeter than the breath of Araby,—
Long have I wandered since I saw thee last,
And now, my long and lonely wanderings past,
As the bee wings her home at even-tide,
With stores by many a bell and bud supplied,
E'en thus I come,—and from beyond the sea,
I bring these idle records unto thee.

Aye ! bright and beautiful afar they glow ;
The rose-hued skies that belt the southern land ;

Pure on Olympus shines the sun-touched snow ;
Fair blooms the rose by Brenta's classic strand.
And Spain ! delightful Spain ! yet wandering there,
Whether at morn I trod the mountain's brow,
Or skimmed at eve the glassy waters, where
Round Græcia's isles they musically flow,
My heart was with thee, Mother ! and a sigh,—
When thou wert standing 'mid thy own home trees,
To breathe at day's sweet fall the evening breeze,
As the soft south wind kissed thy forehead mild,—
Came to thee murmuring from thy absent child,
Freighted with longings after days gone by.

And oft,—how oft, within their festive bowers,
When the light harp woke lighter echoes round,
From glancing feet, and, mingling with the sound,
Came fragrant odours from wild orange flowers,—
When songs were sung and merry tales were told,
Surrounded by the young, the gay, the fair,
I only shared not in the joyance there.
I knew them heartless, and I felt them cold,
And strange sad visions o'er my soul would come,
Of a far land, and of a lowly home,—

Of one dear voice that spoke but to approve,—
One beaming smile,—one fondly clasping hand!
Sweet is the memory of a mother's love—
Dwelling with strangers, in a stranger land.

Mother! methinks, it is a sacred word :—
Let it be spoken,—lo! a sudden gush
Of childhood's days,—of first fresh feelings rush
Over the heart, as though by magic stirred :
The morning prayer when all was soft and still,—
The fond caress when lesson-time drew nigh,—
The treasured cake, a balm for every ill,—
The mild reproof when no one else was by,—
The evening walk across the spicy heath,—
The wild bird's song,—the river's peaceful flow,—
The hedge be-dropped with many a starry wreath,—
The bank all pale with primroses below.
Ah! plodding sadly on life's sterner track,
When clouds are dark and thorns bestrew our way,
And hope has perished from our path away,
How oft the pilgrim with a sigh looks back !
A word is breathed,—the key-note of the strain,—
And the man weeps, and is a child again.

Mother ! sweet mother ! first and fondest friend,

My task, at last,—my pleasant task is o'er ;
And thou wilt read the trifling legends penned

For thee, on many a fair and foreign shore ;
And as the Moslem, anxious to engage

A blessing on his work, with prayers and tears,
Inscribes upon his first and fairest page,

That name—the holiest—which he most reveres,
Thus thy dear name shall be the first to meet,—
To meet and to disarm the critic's eye.

Ah ! surely 'twill have power to sanctify
The after pages, with its influence sweet :

They will not pass a judgment too severe
Upon the book, albeit of little worth,
Which, with a trembling hand and many a fear,

Into the rude rough world is ushered forth,
Asking no stranger's praise—laying no claim
To the least floweret of the wreath of fame :
A simple garland—of mere wood-flowers wild,
An offering to a Mother from her Child.

Grove House, Richmond,
1836.

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Good night to the season ! the dances,
The fillings of hot little rooms,
The glancings of rapturous glances,
The fancyings of fancy costumes,
The pleasures which fashion makes duties,
The praisings of fiddles and flutes,
The luxury of looking at beauties,
The tedium of talking to mutes,
The female diplomatists, planners
Of matches for Laura and Jane,
The ice of her ladyship's manners,
The ice of his lordship's champagne.

New Monthly Mag.

EVENINGS ABROAD.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

EARLY in the Autumn of 18—, a party of friends determined to exchange the quiet sameness of English life, for a tour which promised both novelty and amusement. They did not leave home for the purpose of boring their acquaintances on their return with interminable stories, neither had any one of them the malicious design of publishing “An account of a tour through various countries, perpetrated by seven persons, showing how much knowledge may be gained in a given time, at so much per head.” They did not even promise their correspondents to send to them sketches of the manners and customs of various nations, well knowing, that mere passing travellers who make so rash an attempt, approach the truth as nearly as did those Scythians of old, who, after a few

days' sojourn in the far north, returned home and declared that the districts which were spread forth beyond the confines of their kingdom, could neither be passed nor discerned with the eye, by reason of the feathers which were continually falling, which filled the air and obstructed the view. But they were actuated by various motives, and wisely contrived that these motives should act with peculiar force at the beautiful season when the changed colour of the leaf tells of its approaching fall; when the last wild rose yet lingers, reluctant to give way to the red hip berries; when the vagrant swallows begin to talk of exchanging our misty mornings for a brighter sky, and the little fieldfare, — alas! how all born of earth are governed by interest,—returns from the Scottish alps to feast on our haws and blackberries.

Lady Julian, and Sir Mark Heath, were anxious to visit an old friend who had been for some years resident at Gibraltar; Captain St. Roy, her ladyship's son by a former marriage, had in one of his Mediterranean cruises, married a fair young Hydriote, who, tired of lionizing, began now to pine for fatherland. May and Violet, twins and orphans, were delighted with any scheme that promised change and excitement; May had no pet flirtation in progress, and Violet, whose very name induced romance, was very desirous of writing a diary; moreover, they were willing to follow their aunt, whom they tenderly loved,

to the mountains of the moon, had she proposed it. Harry Dormer pleaded hard for permission to join the party; he preferred a double claim; was he not a relation? Debrett was consulted, but Debrett refused to sanction the assertion; at all events, he was a ward of Sir Mark's; his father had been Sir Mark's early friend and fellow-traveller: besides, he was an artist, and lived but for the exercise of his art; how could he ever hope to emulate Fielding or Turner, if he saw nought but the trim hedges and clover fields of England? It was more indispensable for him than for any one to gaze on the marble fanes of Greece, or the purple skies of Italy,—besides, he really *must* go. This last clause was quite definitive with good-natured Sir Mark; so, with a few necessary admonitions, the pleader's claim was allowed. There were, also, two sweet children in the party, Lady Julian's youngest and dearest, two of the loveliest and liveliest little elves that ever danced on the green-sward, or chased butterflies in a spring morning, and they, with one other individual, completed the group—One, whose own life was to her devoid of interest, because the sources of joy and grief within her heart, had long been as sealed fountains, but who could yet rejoice in the sunshine which gilded the life-stream of another—One, for whom the roses of life's wreath had too soon withered, but who yet loved to pluck away the thorns which might wound

the brow of a fellow-pilgrim—One, who, having ceased to feel, began to observe, and who was ready to wander forth to any land for any space of time, because for her earth held no longer a home ! Such was the travelling party.

EVENING THE FIRST.

INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

Paris.

You ask me, my dear sister, to write to you. You say, that separated as we have been from our infancy, it is time now that we should become acquainted, although it be only on paper. Ah, dissembler! you too, like all the rest of the world, retain the real motive in your heart, and find another of fairer seeming for the lip. You have taken my place at the board, and by the hearth of her who adopted me as her own. You hear her speak of the absent one, you find continually memorials of your stranger sister; in one corner, a roll of scribbled papers, in another a bundle of unfinished sketches, and in some bye-nook of the old mansion a girlish portrait: thus your curiosity is excited—well, be it so. You do not regret more than I do, that my hurried departure from England prevented us from meeting, had it been for one hour, and exchanging one embrace in my old home; nevertheless you must do as I have done,—smile calmly and yield to destiny. If any

thing could induce me to turn Turk, it would be their most comfortable doctrine of fatality; but this is heterodox.

I *will* write to you, but you must expect me to write little of myself, much of the people with whom I journey, and of the places whereat we linger. Every person is endowed with two separate beings—two lives—two worlds. The one, external, and drawn from persons, places, chances, and changes: this is the existence which others see and note,—from which they judge us to be happy or miserable,—the life, as it were of the body, of which poverty and riches, health and sickness, society and solitude, form the events. Mine has, hitherto, been very monotonous, every day bringing with it a recurrence of the same duties, the same enjoyments,—a quiet walk, a twilight chat, an evening visit. The other life is internal. Feelings, affections, waking dreams, memories, and anticipations make up its history. Alas! I dare not tell you of the tumult,—the confusion,—change that once —— but now the case is reversed. Still more than the lake waters on a summer evening — than the slumber of a tired child, is now that inward world of thronging hopes and fears, which kept my youthful spirit in one perpetual fever; while abroad all is variety and excitement. Yes, all of interest that now occupies my life is drawn perforce from external sources. I live in a new world. Blue lake and flower-wreathed mountain, and dark pine forest, all these things, which used to be mere names, are no longer worshipped as unseen divinities, but have assumed tangible forms, and have impressed themselves in the cabinet of memory in characters which

can never be erased or forgotten. Every morning wakens me to some new anticipations. Every evening I lie down with some new and glorious picture of nature, enshrined as a fresh treasure, something more to muse on and to love. A day passes not which brings not with it some picture, or song, or token, that tells a tale of the bye-gone years, and touching one link of the chain of incidents, which have long lain mere barren facts in the mind, clothes those facts with vitality and beauty, and peoples the past with touching and beautiful forms. Ah, Minna! it is of all these things I will tell you. You must not sit still at home, as I did for so many years, and fancy there is nothing worth interest to you beyond the hawthorn hedge that bounds your village garden;—nothing worth love besides your quiet pussy, good cat and excellent mouser though she be;—nothing worth a sigh but a broken china bowl and a spoiled bonnet. You must ramble with me over these enchanting countries, take a peep at the changing aspect of nature, at the still more changing aspect of man, and though you know not yet, as I know, that hope is a vain dream, and sorrow an useless folly, because all beneath the sun is vanity, yet will I try to make you read with interest the little snatches of history and sketches of far-off countries, which you will not find upon a graver page. We are all about to turn collectors. We shall not journey only along the high roads, but turn aside occasionally into the bye-paths and untrodden wildernesses, and if any of us chance to pick up a little bit of locality, you shall have the same forthwith.

How shall we pass this long, long evening? This was a question more easily asked than answered. It was our first evening at Versailles, and a very gloomy evening it was. Harry had already thoroughly investigated the apartment, had opened every drawer, and even with laudable diligence taken up every cushion of every chair. In vain; not a work-box, book, or even stray sheet of paper that promised employment. May and Violet had already wandered at least twenty times from one dismal window to the other; pat, pat, pat, down came the rain, quick, sharp and regular; no hope of a cessation. Violet declared at last, with a miserable yawn, that the rain fell as fast before the window facing the town, as before that one facing the court-yard. To what important results will not a trifle often lead! Newton's apple floats before my mind's eye; but I abstain—that instance has been so often quoted. — “Mamma,” said a little girl, the youngest member of our party, “mamma, I have finished the last page of the last volume of *Evenings at Home* — mamma, I wish they had written a hundred volumes of *Evenings at Home*.”

It was then that Lady Julian proposed that we should while away our evenings abroad, by noting down any little incident or legend we might hear during the day and deposit the same in one portfolio — a literary or *littery* omnibus, to be opened occasionally for the benefit and amusement of the community. This scheme, being a novelty, was hailed with great delight.

“The very thing, my dear aunt!” exclaimed Violet, “you could not have devised a more pleasant plan for putting us all on the *qui vive*, and for passing

these weary stand-still hours ; you have just settled all the preliminaries in time, for here comes St. Roy from his voyage of discovery, with, I really believe, an old guitar. Wait one moment, dear Mùsica, before you begin to sing — one moment, I must go and persuade our good hostess to find me some scraps wherewith to begin this important portfolio, and then we shall be so happy !”—In less than five minutes Violet returned with materials for her work. Odd enough they were, it must be confessed. An old wig-box for the lids, very stiff and hard, but Harry undertook to cut them to the proper size. A piece of flowered damask, very splendid for the outer covering (certainly a bit of an old petticoat), writing paper would do for the interior, and paste could be had at a moment's notice; so Violet set to work, and Mùsica, our pretty Hydriote, seated herself on an ottoman at her husband's feet, and prepared to sing. “I will give you,” she said, “the evening hymn, which in our island we sing to the Virgin, when those we love are absent.”

The vesper time draws nigh,
The pale moon trembles in the horizon fair,
And stars are speaking in the quiet sky,
It is the hour of prayer.

Bend, bend the heart and knee,
For day's long toil and trouble now are past ;
Whom should we seek at this still hour but Thee,
Father ! at last.

It may be in the day
Our hearts, too busy and too worldly grown,
Sometimes forget thy love ;—mistrust thy sway,
This hour is all thine own.

And if some falling tears
When pleading for the loved one far away,
And cherished in our heart's deep core for years,
Should force their way ;

Thou wilt forgive, for Thou
Wert one of us, and earthly grief didst share ;
Pardon our sorrow, and accept our vow,
Now, at the time of prayer.

May holy angels keep
Watch through the dark night, while we lie at rest,
Send peaceful dreamings to our quiet sleep,
Of them, — the lost, — the blest.

Should this night be our last
Of earthly watching, and of earthly care,
Then may we wake in heaven, all sorrow past,
And praise Thee there.

Various causes delayed us on our route, so that we did not reach Rouvray so early as we had expected. In short, Monday morning came, and found us driving through the forest, the beautiful forest of Fontainebleau, and gazing with eyes which drink in all charms of woodland scenery, as eagerly as the thirsty traveller drinks at noon-day the cool fountain waters, on its masses of pale grey rock, seen dimly and indistinctly like the forms in cloudland through the foliage — on its trees of unnumbered dyes, and on its soft green lanes, diverging to the right and to the left, sometimes terminated by a holy cross, sometimes endless, like

the visions of happiness that haunt our waking dreams. Noon found us at the village itself: we passed through the door-way of the lowly inn, of which the roof was lined with swallows' nests, and were soon busily engaged with breakfast. A glorious morning we passed, wandering up and down the splendid galleries, looking till even our eager eyes were sated, on picture and statue, and dreaming all the while of Joan the brave and gentle champion of her country; of Anne of Poitiers kneeling in her beauty and her sorrow to the princely Francis for the boon dearest to a daughter's heart, her father's pardon; and of that personification of all truth, honour and honesty, the Chevalier Bayard. The painter had chosen that moment for his picture, so touchingly described by an old chronicler: "His mother, poor lady, was in a tower of the castle, weeping bitterly, but when she heard that her young son was on his horse impatient to be gone, she descended and commanded him, as much as a mother could command, three things—To love God above all things, to be courteous to all men, and charitable to the poor." Then came tales of gentler import: the fair but erring Gabriëlle; and fairer to woman's eye, because truer to right womanly feeling, Blonde of Russia, wailing over the body of her dead husband. Grieving, yet grieving without despair, for there is an expression in the calm eye and placid lip, which shows that hope and faith are busy in the mourner's heart, whispering of re-union in heaven.

We remained longer in the gallery of Francis the First than in any other, not only because it was the favourite resort of him whom all ladies love, but on

account of other interesting associations. It was here Leonardo da Vinci died in the arms of his master—Leonardo, of whom Vasari said, “*Con le parole sueolgeva al sì e al no ogn’ indurate intenzione.*” We thought too, of a later period in the life of the same monarch, when this very gallery witnessed a rare assemblage of great and talented individuals. It was here that Benvenuto Cellini fixed his celebrated statue of Jupiter, the admiration of all the court, in spite of the efforts made by Madame d’Estampes to throw it aside. She delayed the king’s arrival until night, that it might be seen to disadvantage, but Cellini placed a white torch among the flames, encircling the globe held in the left hand, which being raised somewhat above the head, when lighted, gave additional effect to the statue. She had caused a number of bronze statues, imitations of the finest antiques of Rome, to be placed in the gallery by Primaticcio, Cellini’s rival and enemy; so that they might eclipse his modern production; but his majesty declared Benvenuto’s Jupiter to be superior to them all.

It must have been an interesting group that animated the old gallery; and pity there was no painter there to sketch it! Benvenuto on one side of his noble statue, silently devouring his rage at hearing it cried down from sheer malice and envy. Madame d’Estampes on the other, muttering her indignation to herself, at finding the influences of even her beauty counteracted by the talent of the bold Italian,—the bystanders scarcely certain with whom they should take part. The Dauphin and Dauphiness, Catherine de Medici, then fair and young, and untouched as yet

by the wild dreams of ambition, enjoying with all the glee of girlhood the suppressed anger of the favourite and the perplexity of the artist. We may well fancy that she would enjoy such a scene, when we recollect her, not as the scourge of France, but as the mischievous girl, who so mixed the colours with which Vasari had been working at her portrait, that it looked like thirty devils all alive. In strong contrast to her youthful figure, stood Cardinal Lorraine, the king of Navarre, and the princely Margaret, his wife; Margaret of Valois, the beloved sister of Francis, no longer beautiful, but interesting for her talents, her noble spirit, and her devoted affection for her brother.

On our return to the inn, we learned that it would not be possible to procure horses for some hours. What should we do? The hostelry was noisy, and mine host, a chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur and St. Louis, much too grand a gentleman to command order. What could we do better than return to the palace and obtain permission to spend the long afternoon within its delightful precincts. It was in the queen's boudoir that we chose to domesticate ourselves. A right pleasant apartment. Small as a boudoir, and lofty as all rooms should be; unadorned but by the still beauty of the scene on which the high and ample window looked, — a bower, thick and impervious, hedging in a small velvet lawn. The rich mellow light of an October sun streamed through the trees, adding the variety of light and shade to the variety of colour, and almost arousing to motion a Parian statue of Diana, dimly seen through the flickering foliage, while all the time, the diamond

drops of a half hidden fountain sparkled and revelled in the sunbeams, and filled the heart with all soft images of peace and hope. For one moment, as I listened to the trickling waters, and looked on the quiet bower, I longed to be the denizen of so sweet a resting place ; but I thought of its three last owners, — Marie Louise, Josephine, and Antoinette, and checked the idle wish.

“ It is pleasant,” said Lady Julian, “ thus to pursue royalty into its retirement. Yet, I confess, this royal *workyday* room, pleases me less than the one we visited at Brussels. Do you remember, May, how every thing there seemed to intimate that a queen could occupy, as well as amuse, her leisure? Do you recollect, Violet, the old piano, and the Raffaele hanging near the door, with a copy opposite, painted by the queen of the Netherlands, and how we all fancied her and the princess Mary, divested of white satin and pearls, sitting down to their quiet employments, and to the enjoyment of each other’s society ?”

“ Mamma, dear,” said Emily, “ I wish we had some employment now, for I am tired of listening to that fountain, and looking on those fading trees. Oh ! mamma, the red portfolio ! why should we not look at it now ? I am sure there must be something in it by this time.”

So the precious case was sent for, and soon made its appearance. Sir Mark, our guard, guide, and director, stretched himself in the sunniest corner of the softest couch for a doze, and Frà Diavolo, the most sensible spaniel that ever set forth to see the world, followed his example.

Lady Julian took the portfolio, which, composed of such heterogeneous materials, had been finished with some degree of elegance by the neat-handed May; and after a little rustling and turning of leaves, said, inquiringly, "Poetry or prose, good people?"

"Ye gods! what a question," answered Harry, "in so poetical a spot. Why, there is poetry all around us; she sighs among those wavering autumn leaves, bends over the murmuring fountain, smiles pensively in the half averted countenance of the graceful statue, and flutters in every throb of every pulse that animates my fair and right well beloved cousin Violet Fane. Poetry, by all manner of means! But what is this?" he continued, after a moment's pause, "May has not half finished her work; what is a book without a motto?—a bottle of wine without a corkscrew — a box of money without a key — a play without a bill of fare. Here is a sentence which I cut out of a right venerable volume, written by one Simon Waterson, in the year 1623; just the thing. 'Booke makers are full wise folke, who paine and pine themselves away by writing to subject themselves to the censure of such, who will pick and pull them by their words, phrases, and lines, when some of them themselves have not one graine of honesty; unmannerly guests, who, when they have been well and kindly entertained, flinch away, never giving thanks, but despising and dispraising their courteous entertainment.'"

LA VALLIERE.

Lines suggested by a Painting representing Louise la Vallière at the age of sixteen, receiving a coral cross from the hands of Père Anselme, as the reward of a charitable action.

Beautiful! beautiful! thy pensive face,
Lovely the flowing of thy golden hair,
Faultless thy form of soft and sylph-like grace,
Matchless the moulding of thy features fair;
Yet 'tis not this that lends thee interest rare.
In the rapt eyes that gaze upon thy brow,—
It is the charm of innocence that there
Reposes and smiles on thy cheek of snow.
Who — who could dream of sin while gazing on thee now!

Soft are they, soft and pure, those orient pearls
Like frozen tears on pity's cheek that lie;
They seem to love to cluster 'mid thy curls,
Yet may we more of purity espy
In the deep quiet of thy dove-like eye!
Louise! thine is the depth of happiness,
Approved by him, the man of sanctity,
Whose sweetest task it is to watch and bless
The soft o'erflowings of thy young heart's tenderness.

And thou, in all the pride of youth didst kneel
By the rude couch where Want his watch was keeping,
Didst bend with all thy loveliness to heal
The wounds of her whose tears that couch were steeping,
Subdued at thy approach was all her weeping.
For thou didst tell her of a home on high,
Where the reward of earthly sufferance reaping,
She would not shed a tear nor heave a sigh,
But live in perfect bliss through all eternity.

It is deep grief and bitterness to turn
To the rich pageant of thy after days,
When thy young modesty was forced to learn
To meet the ardour of a people's gaze ;
And he — thy monarch-suitor — loved to raise
Blushes of beauty on thy soft rose-cheek,
Waked by the warmth of his impassioned praise,
And sought sweet words of blandishment to speak,
The which to disbelieve, thy heart was all too weak.

Few years are pass'd — no more a village maid ;
Such things scarce live within thy memory now.
Thy home is in a marble palace made,
Where softest flowers of foreign nurture grow,
And lulling fountains musically flow,
Waking sweet melody. While o'er them bent,
Hang Parian statues,— wanting but the glow
Of life to make them perfect ; here are blent
All things that make life sweet—save one, the heart's content.

And thou art queen-like in thy rich array,
Thy vest of satin, and thy pearl decked zone ;
Fall thy soft glances on whate'er they may,
Gem, palace, fountain, flower, all are thine own ;
The gifts of him, whose tenderness alone
Gives to them value in thy woman's eye,
For desert were to thee his home and throne ;
If he — thy fond heart's idol were not nigh,
To give thee smile for smile, and tender sigh for sigh.

A festival ! — and thou art gayest there,
Moving like beauty through the airy dance ;
While all proclaim thee fairest of the fair,
By the fixed pleasure of their steadfast glance,
And thine own youth and joyousness enhance,
The beauty and the brilliance of the scene ;
While he looks on, more proudly pleased, perchance,
To think his Eden hath so fair a queen,
Than in the battle field, where he hath victor been.

Thine after hour,— and passed the pageant by
Thy wearied hand supports thy snowy brow.
What! tears upon thy cheek! and thy deep eye
Droops it in sorrow more than langour now?
Gone are the flatterers of thy midnight show,
Absent the idol of thy erring heart;
And, hushed the pleading of his passioned vow,
Memory hath no pure pleasures to impart,
To one who dwells from virtue's holy ways apart.

And what is that on which thy tearful gaze
Is fixed with such intensity of thought?
Ah, me! — a record of thine early days,
Ere splendour thy life's happiness had bought,
And mournful visions to thy soul are brought,
Of fair green fields, and gay and sunny skies;
Of a bright hearth at home, where love, untaught
By worldly love, made its own paradise;—
A cross,— a coral cross — before thy tear-dimmed eyes

Has placed these memories of bye-gone days,
Memories that often sleep, but never die, —
Like that fair spirit in the harp that stays,
And wakens when the wild winds murmur by.
Alas! tears soothe,— they do not sanctify
To-morrow, and this lesson given in vain,
The world resumes it's hollow empyr,
And thou, enfettered by its golden chain
Wilt be — its victim and its votary again.

LE GRAND BOURBON.

She stood alone amid the crowd,
In beauty and in rank,
The people's shout was long and loud,
Yet from that shout she shrank.
Did it not tell her — every tone
Of that strange tongue — she was alone?

And yet it is a lovely spot —
Fit home for such fair queen ;
A fairy world — where grief dwells not,
Or dwells, unheard — unseen.
A world of statues, founts, and flowers,
And light lutes, touched in summer bowers.

Her dark eye glanced from tree to tree,
O'er verdant lawn and aisle,
And then her heart mused mournfully,
On her own Spain the while ;—
Her sunny Spain, where light and bloom,
Dwelt ever round her childhood's home.

She looked upon the glittering throng,
Courtiers, and ladies fair ;
And then she sighed, to think among
Them, no fond heart was there ;
None, whose pale cheek or drooping eye,
Would brighten if her step drew nigh.

And little did she care to know,
A throne should be her seat.
She was alone, alone, although
A king knelt at her feet.—
She was too young, too pure, to prize
Such cold and heartless vanities.

She had brought from her distant land
Full many a priceless gem ;
Rich diamonds for her fair white hand,
Pearls for her diadem ;
And she had brought one fair young tree,
Dearer than any gem could be.

It was a thing of life and lone,—
Like her, a child of Spain,
And more,—yet more, it bloomed alone
Amid the green-house train.

What marvel that through sun and shower,
She tended well her orange flower.

A revel ! — kings and queens are met,
In the old hall to-night,
And every sound to song is set,
And every step is light ;
Joy reigns o'er all. But where is she,
The queen of this rich pageantry ?

Apart, in the dim grove I see,
A lady, fair and young ;
She sits beneath her orange tree,
And sings her own wild song, —
As her soul drinks the soft perfume,
That drops from every bud and bloom.

Again her father-land she sees :
How could she e'er depart ?
Where her name was the Penates
Enshrined in every heart.
Where not a hand and not a sword,
But sprung forth at her lightest word.

Again she feels her mother's kiss,
She hears the ringing tone.
Oh, God ! to wake from dreams like this,
And feel one's self alone ;
Alone — beneath a foreign sky,
With nought to do but — mourn — and die.

Alas ! I wander from my theme,
That queen has passed away,
And they who made one brilliant dream
Of life — oh, where are they ?
Sleeping beneath the cold gray stone,
Their very names from memory gone.

But one sweet pledge remains to prove,
How the heart's memories bloom,
A record of the deathless love.
The exile bore her home,
When dwelling, though a queen afar
From her own loved and lost Navarre.

"Well," exclaimed Harry, "I cannot but marvel at the luxuriance of a lady's imagination. All this rhyming is conjured into being by the old gardener's simple sentence, 'Et ce grand oranger, mesdames, fut planté ici par une jeune reine de Navarre, qui l'avait apporté avec elle de son pays lointain.' I should have pondered long enough ere I could have made so much out of so little."

(*May.*) "You would never have made it, Harry. Your spirit is of too light and independent a nature ever to feel that desolation of the heart which bows the spirit down when we live in a strange land, and look around for the light of love in vain. May you never feel it!" May's eyes were filled with tears, and Harry was at her side in a moment.

"Nay, sweet! my coz, be merry, look not so sadly, dear May. How know you that all my peevish criticism was not meant as a mask for my vanity,—that I, even I, was not the very scribbler of the lines in question?" A slight curl of May's lip, half told that she could, if she would, have wholly disproved this probability; but she spoke not, nor answered her apologist, but by a kind smile, and Lady Julian resumed her reading.

A NIGHT AT CHAILLY.

It was already night, when we drew up at the door of a miserable auberge, in this most miserable village, but the darkness prevented our seeing the poverty of the place. The horses were ready to take us on through the forest. The leader and guardian of our little party, cast a look of dismay at the broken windows and dilapidated door-way of the hostelry. "Change horses!" but he was attacked by one universal clamour. To go through the forest! the beautiful forest at night, and on a dark night! The whole party exclaimed against the folly and wickedness of such a proceeding. One, had certain ideas of reclining like the melancholy Jaques under a tree at noon; another dreamed of rambling, it might be not alone, along the meandering greensward paths shut in by high trees; and a third, already half-way out of the carriage, exclaimed, "By the mournful manes of Milton's Ladye, and the merry ones of Robinhood,—by the eyes of the arch deceiver, Rosalind, and by the hunger of sweet Imogen, fond, faithful Imogen,—by all that is sacred in history, and holy in poetry, will I never consent to such heretical proceedings!" Hereupon, our worthy director was forced to emerge from the comfortable corner wherein he had ensconced himself for a snug two-hours slumber, and to drag his whole weight into the saloon of this same auberge. "Enfin, nous sommes ici," he said, as usual, and we did then look round with something like fear, at the asylum into which

the enthusiasm (enthusiasm is always in the way of comfort) of some of our party had betrayed us. Neither did this feeling subside, when the maid, with a *fichu* twisted round her head, which looked as though it had at some no very distant portion of time performed the offices of duster and broom, entered to make preparations for supper. I, for one, having beheld her take from one pocket the bread we were to eat,—from the other, the knives and forks we were to use, determined to witness no more such abominations, stretched myself on a thing that had once been a sofa, and shut my eyes. The memory of that supper at Chailly, will go with me to my grave. Sour leavened bread, which they only, who, for their sins, have sojourned in a provincial French village, can appreciate; meat, of which it was perfectly impossible to determine the name, and wine, such wine! the priests of Bacchus, rogues as they were, would have disdained to pour it on the ground!—I retreated to my sofa, so to call it, and St. Roy told the children a marvellous story to appease their hunger,—a marvellous story of a monster that, with lashing tail, and goggle eyes, used in olden days to ravage the neighbouring forest. My sleepy ears only caught a word here and there—terrific fangs—helpless victim—crunched the bones—fiery eyes: fiery eyes were the last words that followed me out of the room, when I left it for the purpose of seeking my own dormitory. Surely, I thought, it was the den of the very wild beast alluded to;—a dirty floor, disguised neither by carpet nor matting; a window with three broken panes, stuffed with paper and rags; a rickety three-legged bedstead, without curtains; a three-cornered looking-

glass, over against the foot of the bedstead, resting on the mantel-piece. Such were the horrors that presented themselves to my half-closed eyes. But I was sleepy and tired, and having in vain sought for an extinguisher, blew out my candle and crept into bed, uttering, as I did so, a low but hearty anathema against forest scenery, lights and shades, lovers' walks, and all such like rubbish. Even Shakspeare, the god of my idolatry, came in at that moment for a little of the rancour and malice with which my heart was overflowing; and I slept, and dreamed a dream.—Once again those eyes beamed on me,—those dove eyes which, in this world, I shall never again behold. Again that smile, dearer to me than all the treasures of all the world, woke rapture in my heart;—I forgot that half this earth was between us—between us, who, in days past, deemed earth a paradise, because we looked forward to wandering through it hand-in-hand;—I forgot that time had elapsed—that my own heart, and my own feelings, and my own affections were changed;—that the world, and the love of the world, had done that which time and sorrow could never have done. We were alone together, wandering in the dark o'ershaded wood:—it was night; but our pathway was light, as the star-lit walk in the sky; for we were led on by the light of love. All around was deep silence, but we could hear each other's sighs, and our feelings of deep, unutterable happiness wanted not words. The bliss of that moment's dreaming made ample amends for days, and weeks, and years of weariness unspeakable. Suddenly, my loved one clung closer to my arm; her dear head dropped, as in terror, on my shoulder;—a raging

beast, the terror of the forest, was coming towards us; he lashed his tail in fury, and stared fearfully with his round, fierce, fiery eyes. A cry of dismay, not uttered for myself, escaped me. I awakened with the cry; still I heard the pattering of feet, and still, oh, horror! I beheld the rolling, fiery eyes. I rubbed my own, I sat up in bed, I pinched myself to make sure of my own identity; I knew, I felt that I was awake; I was certain of it, and as certain that there indeed, just opposite me, were the terrible glances from which I could not escape. I lay down again, and tried to sleep and renew my broken dream; but, alas! no; a dream once broken, be it the dream of night, or the dream of youth, like a Venice mirror, cannot be repaired:—besides, terror effectually chased sleep. I could hear the monster's feet patter, patter, rustle, rustle; I could feel his hot suffocating breath. I emerged from the bed-clothes, and slowly, fearfully opened my eyes;—I could see *his* eyes glimmer and glisten through the darkness. Then I heard the sounds of footsteps passing my door; I tried to call, as gently as I could, "Timothy!" No man being a hero to his valet, I did not see why I must needs be braver than the rest of the world. But my call was too low and faint to be heard; so, railing in my heart (for I was too frightened to utter curses, loud or deep,) against Timothy, the monster, fiery eyes, Chailly, and every thing or person connected with my present fearful condition, I at last fell asleep; yet was I haunted all the night through with strange noises, harassing visions, and, above all, fiery eyes.

The next morning I awoke with a chilling weight on my heart, but, to my great delight, found myself

alone in my room. I was now grateful to the uncurtained windows, which the night before I had bitterly reviled, because they admitted the morning light; and the morning light banished the monster and his goggle eyes. I did not at all like the half-smiling, half-incredulous look, with which Timothy, that old and highly confidential servant, listened to my story, when I related it to him, as he was putting up my carpet-bag. It is so provoking to be disbelieved, especially when, being the hero of one's own adventure, one feels morally certain of the truth of one's story.

The fellow actually grinned, when I carelessly added, "And Timothy, if we do not procure better lodgings to night, you had better have a bed made up in my room;—that tormenting cramp, you know—sometimes,—Hem!"

"Sir," said Timothy, as he still poked about the room, "pray, may I ask how you put out your candle last night? I verily believe, here it is on the mantel-piece; not an extinguisher, not so much as a table in the room. What a hole for a Christian, let alone a gentleman, to sleep in!"

"How did I put it out? Blew it out to be sure," said I sulkily, all my anger of the preceding night reviving.

"I thought as much, sir, for I smelt a burning wick when I passed your room door last night, and the candle being on the mantel-piece opposite the looking-glass, and the wick only half-extinguished, over against the foot of the bed —"

"Pshaw, nonsense, Timothy! how can you imagine such utter absurdities?"

Here Lady Julian declared she had exhausted her budget. Much eloquent criticism ensued. May declared that this last story was absolutely fit only for children in the nursery, but her observation did not produce its intended effect, for when she turned round with her quiet smile to appeal to Harry for its truth, she perceived that she might as well have been silent, for the gentleman had vanished.

The day was yet but half over, and while we were still debating on the best method of whileing it away, two cavaliers, dressed in the costume of the days of Francis, emerged from among the trees and invited us to a ramble in the gardens ; so leaving dear, good, sleepy Sir Mark to the enjoyment of his dreaming, we walked forth from the queen's boudoir in the palace of Fontainbleau. How and where St. Roy and his friend had procured their disguising dresses ; how intensely Emily, and her sister, and Frà Diavolo enjoyed their romp on the velvet lawn, and whether the golden-haired Agnes or Frà himself made the most noise ; and how much we all fancied ourselves the merrier for representing a scene *a la Boccacio*, are points which must be left to your imagination to decide, Minna.

EVENING THE SECOND.

Lake Leman woos me with its crystal face,
The mirror where the stars and mountains view
The stillness of their aspect in each trace
Its clear depth yields of their far height and hue.

BYRON.

INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

Simplon.

WELL, dearest Minna, amid fog and rain, hail and snow, we reached Simplon, the highest village in the old world. I do not know, after all, a more comfortable half-hour in a traveller's day than that which succeeds his arrival at a good inn. At early morning we set off with bright hopes and elated spirits; we gaze with rapture on the secluded village, the sunny sky, the picturesque costume; but day advances, our spirits flag; on a nearer approach we find that the village is ill-built, that the gay colours of the peasants' dress hide dirt and poverty; the sky darkens; we lower our expectations, and bethink ourselves of looking out for comfort only. Is it not thus also in the journey through life? Well for us if we be not disappointed in our more moderate hopes.

The *salon* of the little mountain inn afforded a very exhilarating spectacle to us, tired, hungry, and cold as we were. A floor of the brightest wood, a crackling, blazing, heart-enlivening fire, a table spread with honey, peaches, and grapes, not to mention good brown bread and plenty of it. This was the pleasant sight that greeted our eyes as we entered and bade farewell to the rain and sleet. And we praised the good things on the table, and did eat thereof, and were satisfied; and we threw a fresh faggot on the sparkling fire, and ranged the chesnuts in triple rows upon the hearth, and drew our chairs round in a merry circle, and listened to the hail that pelted now in right earnest against the casement, and to the wind that howled dismally among the mountain passes, and to the hoarse murmurs of the swollen hill torrents, and we lifted up our hearts in gratitude, and owned that we were snugly sheltered from the blast. Even Harry, the Sardanapalus of our party, declared that he began, after all the horrors of the day, to wax comfortable. Sir Mark, after his usual "*Enfin, nous sommes ici!*" threw himself back in his easy chair, placed in the very warmest corner, with a look of indefinable satisfaction on his handsome, good-humoured countenance. Emmy and Agnes, seated on a low stool at their mother's feet, were so fortunate as to possess themselves of two fine, large, purring cats, which, after much coaxing, suffered themselves to be stroked into quiet slumber. May betook herself to pencilling some splendid Alpine flowers we had collected in the morning, and Violet to drying the same; while our kind reader reminded us that it was the evening destined to an examination

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of the portfolio. Three weeks had elapsed since it had been last opened, spent for the greater part in Geneva; but we had not been idle. There were hours of lonely thought in the morning sail or ramble, and evenings of busy scribbling at our happy fireside, in the intervals of conversation, and Lady Julian smiled when she said: "Our ardour, far from decreasing, as I expected it would, seems to grow with what it feeds on. My task, I see, will be of longer continuance than it was at Fontainebleau. What have we here? We will begin with the shortest piece."

LAKE LEMAN.

Hail to thee, Lemman! Hail to thee, thou lovely lake! A sunny day, and the sky is blue, as though it mirrored the waters of Italy. The little waves seem to leap up in very joy to greet the monarch of the day. A bird with a silver wing, like the promise of hope, is seen hovering for a moment and then disappears. There is a slight snow wreath on the uppermost edge of the bright wave. It is the trimming of the gala robe with which the fair lake has decked herself to meet the sun-god. The lake is skirted by low, blue hills, and they smile in the waters, and the semblance is lovelier than the reality. And, lo! a little fairy boat from behind that jutting headland. We throw ourselves into it. A light breeze arises, just enough to fill the white sail; we recline at our ease, and whisper to our own heart: "Now for a dream of happiness!" There is solitude on the waters, and silence, but not deep silence. Ever and anon,

the busy hum of the distant city steals on the ear, and tells of the world and of mankind ; and now and then the light carolling of a happy heart is heard ; it comes from the poor fishermen as their slight skiff passes near our own. Away, away from the city ! The world is a vanity, and mankind are worse than vain. Away ! away ! we would be alone ! On, on ! over the peaceful bosom of the lake. We are shut in by the mountains, and by the blue hills quite. There was an opening, it became gradually imperceptible, now it is lost. We are surrounded by mountains, some near, some blue in the distance, and towering above all, the snow-capped Mont Blanc. Can it really be snow when the air is balm, and the valley dropped with flower bells ? There is solitude on the waters, and now there is perfect silence. Now to throw ourselves back, to gaze on the blue sky, and let the heart indulge in its own sweet reverie ! Now to think on our loved one — the loved in vain — the lost ; now to dream of that happy moment when the spirit shall be freed and shall join her who was dearer in life than life itself ! Dearer than life ! — oh what has life been, since last we parted ; but a weariness, a vanity, a vexation of spirit ! Of all the gifts belonging to this lower earth, surely there is none dearer to the soul than this one of mortality. Oh ! if in those bright and blessed worlds that are afar off, beyond that clear sky on which we gaze so often and so passionately — if there, our loved one awaits our arrival, how joyfully, how gratefully shall we welcome death. Death ! — what is death, but the beginning of a better life — the portal of a fairer kingdom — the means by which we hope to realise

those dreams of bliss which are imagined here? We have revelled in the future, let us revert to the past. Pass we slightly over the few last years. We will forget in this blessed hour, on these tranquil waters, the sorrows and the cares, the toils and the turmoils, that belong to middle life. Go we back to the time when we knew not of these things, when our own heart was as a fathomless well of pure, unutterable happiness; when we deemed that men were good, that the earth was lovely, and our own joyous feelings unchanging; when time had not yet shown us the falsehood of hope's colouring. We have learned truth since then. We have gained experience. It came with our first sorrow, and now we know the earth to be barren, and our fellow-mortals selfish, and our own pleasures all, all perishing, and we sigh over our knowledge.

Yet dear is the memory of those hours of ignorance, those hours of youth, and it is well sometimes in our busy after-life to recall them. Well, in such a scene as this, to dwell on the fairest portion of our life's history. Our hour of deep enjoyment is over, but let us carry on its influence with us, it will render us less anxious about the fretting cares of life — it will render us more resigned to the troubles of the world we hope to quit. Farewell to thee, Lake Lemman. Blessed are the influences thou dost exercise, in thy quiet beauty, over the wounded spirit. Farewell to thee! Thou art lovely in thy calmness.

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Hail to thee! thrice hail to thee, Lake Lemman! I have sung of thee in thy stillness, let me now sing of thee in thy storms. Lo, a voice has gone forth,

"Let the tempest arise," and the tempest arises and moves on, leaving behind him death and desolation as the marks of his foot-print. The heavens are dark, the clouds gather, they assemble in solemn blackness over the lake; and the waters are dark, they foam and they toss in impotent rage; it seems as though they scorn, and would overleap their barriers. There is a deep silence. The bird is away to its nest on the shore, and covers its young with its trembling wing. The fishes have retired to the depth of the wave, every living thing has sought its covert. There is a heaviness on the air worse than the stillness. Now the fury of the storm breaks forth. The cloud has burst, and, lo! torrents descend from the opened windows of the sky. The waves arise, terrible in their blackness; the thunder rolls hoarsely; it approaches,—it is the voice of wrath. A flash of lightning lights up with terrible distinctness the rolling waters. There is a slight speck tossing about,—it sinks—it reappears—it is a boat, and there are living creatures in it. They cry for help, but their cry is vain; they toss their arms in the agony of despair. They are in the middle of the lake, where the depth of the waters has never yet been sounded! Heaven help them! Another flash,—they have disappeared, and the waves have closed over them. Who would believe that these are the waters of whose *still* beauty we sung erewhile. Farewell to thee, Lake Lemán! Farewell to thy roaring mountains of fathomless waves! Terrible art thou when the spirit of the storm is abroad upon thee! Terrible art thou in thy tempests!

THE YOUTH OF D'AUBIGNY.

There are, perhaps, few continental cities that offer a greater variety of attractions to travellers of all classes, than Geneva. The sentimental may roam on the shores of its lake, and manufacture rhymes respecting its balmy air and waters fair; the gourmand may luxuriate over the delicious trout with which those same waters abound. — I must indeed give a passing sigh to those exquisite specimens of ichthyology myself; I venerate those trout, and dear to me is the remembrance thereof. Such trout! oh ye gods! — diviner food than your ambrosia — but I digress — I beg pardon — those trout!! — The artist may walk to Ferney, look from Voltaire's terrace, and confess that even his critical eye is satisfied: in fact, if he have a soul, he cannot, just then, think of criticising. The lover of ascending heights may clamber to the summit of Mont Antoine, and acknowledge that his trouble has been seldom so well repaid; and fine ladies and children of all ages may visit Monsieur Bott's magazine, and behold the fairy tales of Araby the blest, enacted. Birds that trill, and warble, and quaver, and at last sink down exhausted with their own sweet song, into the flower-bell from which, at the magician's touch, they did emerge, — apes, playing on harps with a mien as fantastical as half the harp-players of fairer form, — caterpillars that crawl, and mice that nibble; and yet are all these creatures unendowed with the breath of life. But it is not for any one of the attractions here enumerated that I love Geneva. I love Geneva for the spirit of real religion that dwells in the city, and

for the hospitable and tolerant spirit with which at all times she has received and honoured those, who, persecuted by bigotry and party spirit in their own lands, have hastened hither as to a city of refuge. Yes; I love Geneva, and though many a time my ancles were twisted and wrenched by the vile round stones of her narrow dirty streets, I made many a pilgrimage to her churches, to look on the spot wherein the brave and the upright were buried. Touching one of the holy dead who sleeps in the precincts of St. Peter's Church, I heard many particulars which interested me deeply, for he was one of the truest-hearted and most valiant among France's heroes when France was a land of chivalry.

He, of whom I am about to speak, prosecuted his youthful studies at Geneva, and at the early age of ten years had given so decided a promise of the future firmness of his character, that when, being imprisoned on a charge of heresy, they offered him the terrible alternative of death or the mass, he answered, "The fear of the mass has taken away the fear of death!" Theodore d'Aubigny was the descendant of a noble family, but so poor that he saw no other prospect than that of cutting his road to fortune with his own good sword. But while he was busily engaged in various sieges and battles, it happened that the inheritance of his fathers fell to him. Still poor, and covered with honourable wounds, he returned to claim his lands, but a stranger had taken possession of the orphan's property, and he was disowned by his relations. Sick of fever, fever brought on by rage and disappointment,—smarting under a bitter sense of injustice, so hard to bear, he dragged his

weary limbs to Orleans, and there with the paleness of death on his brow, and indignation in his heart, he forced his way into the presence of the judges. Faint and sick, with death quivering on his lip, he insisted on pleading his own cause. He stated his claims, brought forward convincing proofs of his right, and then pleaded so pathetically, and spoke in words so touching of his wrongs, his sufferings, and his extreme distress, that the judges called out with one voice, "None but his father's son could speak thus!" and without hesitation they awarded to him his patrimony.

We have seen our young hero as a soldier and an orator; let us now behold him in a different character. It was a bright afternoon in the early part of September, when a very happy though small party assembled on the old stone terrace, at the back of the Chateau de Talcy. A fairer spot for the free communing of happy hearts could scarcely have been devised. The terrace overlooked a splendid prospect of hill and valley, redolent of the bright hues of autumn, and at this moment burnished with the rich sunset; round the heavy gothic pillars that skirted the terrace, some fair hand had trained a sweet variety of creepers, and they grew luxuriantly, and their bright flowers of every hue contrasted sweetly with the old grey stone. At one end of the terrace, under a group of fine orange trees, rich at once in blossom and in fruit, sat an old knight of grave yet not stern aspect; and by his side a fair and innocent girl who leaned confidently against him; and at their feet reclined a young and graceful cavalier, to whom they both listened, as they listen who love to listen. It

was of battles and sieges that the young man spoke, and though yet in the very first bloom of early manhood he spoke only of those in which he had himself taken active part. The old man, who had been a warrior, in early days, listened with breathless attention to details of the siege of Pons, of Archiac; of the battle of Jarnac, and the great skirmish of la Roche Abeille. The old man's eye lighted up and his brow kindled, as he drank in the spirited words of the young soldier's speech; but the maiden's colour changed and her lip quivered only when he spoke, as truth sometimes obliged him to speak, of the part he had himself borne in these affrays. Suddenly there was a stop in the animated discourse. A sound as of the trampling of armed men was heard; the sounds seemed to come along the high road in front of the Chateau. The old man arose with troubled aspect, and he said "Away, away, chevalier! thy persecutors draw nigh; I will keep them in parley while thou dost escape to the hidden bower in the garden. My child will show thee the way."

Now, it happened that this old terrace was supported by two stone pillars of enormous thickness. Theodore advanced to the parapet wall: he was about to throw himself from it; but a low sweet voice whispered, "They will be here in a moment; they will see you in the garden from hence; follow me."—Lightly the girl crossed the terrace; she looked for a moment on the marble squares with which it was paved, touched a spring, and, lo! the stone rose up and disclosed to view a narrow winding staircase, concealed within the huge round pillar whereof we spoke anon.—"I cannot descend," he said, and his brow

crimsoned as he spoke ; "a D'Aubigny cannot stoop to hide himself." But, for the first time, her small white hand was laid upon his arm ; quietly she drew him after her, and how could he choose but yield to the gentle impulse ?

Down, down they went, the maiden in advance, and the young knight guided by her white and waving garments, which shone with flickering light through the gloom, assisted somewhat by various chinks in the old pillar. But when they reached the foot of the staircase they were in total darkness.— "You must even take my hand and submit to a woman's guidance for once," said Diana ; "the way is somewhat intricate, but I have been used to traverse it from childhood." What did Theodore care that the way was dark and intricate ? He would have been well content, there to wander with his sweet guide for ever. At last they emerged from their subterraneous passage, and found themselves in what the old knight had called the hidden bower ; and in good truth it deserved its name, for it had no other approach than the one our young pilgrims had just traversed. The Chateau de Talcy had been built in stormy times, when every man was his own defender, and this bower had served as a hiding-place to more than one of its masters. The secret of its entrance was kept sacredly by the owners of the mansion, and known to them alone. Let it not be supposed that because hidden, it was enveloped in gloom. Oh no, the free air of heaven played round about it, and the sweet light of heaven glowed gloriously through its rich painted windows. It stood in the midst of a labyrinth, so artfully constructed that strangers might wander

therein for hours, and suspect not its existence. Of late years it had been devoted only to the amusement of the daughter of the house ; and the fair Diana, who naturally loved silence and seclusion, had spared no pains to embellish it. Great therefore was the young knight's surprise to see, when he entered, that the light, mellowed as it passed through the stained glass ; fell on pictures of surpassing beauty,—on statues of Parian marble, and on those fairest of created things that so sweetly attest the presence of woman,—flowers, lovely flowers ! But one thing in the bower gave Theodore more pleasure than all these. A lute lay on the table, and by it a volume, a manuscript volume of music and songs, his own songs, his own music, which Diana had received with an air so indifferent, that almost he had repented having made the offering. She had then been occupied by him ; her lips had breathed forth the words of his heart, and her fingers had touched the chords which he had strung together.

Theodore d'Aubigny forgot at that moment that he was one of a fallen and proscribed party,—a Hugonot who had but lately escaped the bloody massacre of St. Bartholomew's day,—that even then his pursuers were seeking him. He forgot every thing but the sweet face before him, which blushed and smiled and half turned away, and knew not how to hide its deep confusion when Theodore took up the lute, and in those low deep tones which go directly to the heart, sung the song at which the page was opened, and which, he rightly judged, was the very last the lady herself had warbled forth.

SONG.

Dear to the soldier's heart
Are the tented field and battle plain :
But far more sweet is the hope to meet—
The battle done and the glory won—
With his own true love again,
And never more to part—never, oh never !

Sweet to the soldier's ear
Are the rolling drum and the shrill war cry ;
But sweeter than all, at the twilight fall,
In garden lone, is the whispered tone
Of his true love's faintest sigh,
As she draws her dear one near—nearer, oh nearer !

Bright to the soldier's eye
Are the colors that flutter o'er him ;
But far more bright in the warrior's sight
Is the lowliest flower of his cottage bower,
When his true love stands before him,
With tear and blush and sigh,—lovely, oh lovely !

And soft as silent night
Is the soldier's sleep 'neath the cloudy sky ;
But softer to him is the eye all dim,
And the golden hair, and the cheek so fair
Of the vision that wanders by
His worn and weary sight,—softly, oh softly !

The latter part of Theodore's song had more hearers than had its commencement. Both he and Diana started when the old knight spoke : " A wise and a witty cavalier, truly ! to be touching lutes and singing idle songs, when he deems his very life in peril. Come, mad sir, a young guide led you hither ; but

you must be content with an old one to lead you back again ; and you, maiden, stay here awhile ; we have that to speak of that is not meet for a lady's ear."

"One word, only one," whispered Diana, as she sprung forward ; "are they gone, quite gone?"—We will suppose that her father's answer was satisfactory, for she turned round with a laughing eye and glowing cheek, and said gaily, "Fare you well for a short time, my father; I will do your bidding; and fare you well, sir knight, my sometime guest—when next you sing soft songs to lady lone in hidden bower, fix your eye on the door, and not on the lady's face, if you will not other listener than herself."

Silently Theodore followed De Talcy. Neither spoke until they reached the great dining-hall, and then De Talcy said, "We were mistaken in our fears; the men came not hither to seek your life; on the contrary, they came to declare that hostilities have ceased, that the persecuted Hugonots may now emerge from their hiding places. Theodore answered, "I thank you for these tidings; but had they not arrived, I must have torn myself from this too happy retreat. Seigneur De Talcy, you have saved my life; for four months you have lodged me in your castle, at the hazard of your own; I will not repay you with base ingratitude. For four months I have seen daily your young daughter, and she is dearer to me than life; but I will not seek to steal her from you, neither will I link her fate to one whose only fortune is his sword. I will go to Rochelle this very day."

"Have you never," asked the old man, with a scrutinizing look,—“tell me; have you never spoken of love to my child?"

"Never, on the honour of a knight," was the quick reply.

"Then," replied De Talcy, "I will tell you, young d'Aubigny, that so much I love and honour your candour, that I will speedily put you in the way to gain wealth, and her who is dearer to you than wealth. You shewed me, but yesterday, some papers in an old ebon cabinet relative to the enterprise of Amboise, and attached to one of them is the seal of the Chancellor l'Hopital. That seal and that paper would work his ruin. Let him know that they are in your possession, and if he refuse to give you an ample gratuity, offer them to his enemies. I will stake my life that you might obtain from them, at least, twenty thousand crowns."

"Think you so?" said Theodore, as he arose and left the room. He was absent a long time. Let us not suppose that he wavered in his duty. Oh no! his true heart could not falter. Let us rather suppose that he was praying, in that sad hour, for strength to enable him to conquer the greatest temptation that had ever yet been presented to him. He re-entered the hall with a pale cheek and troubled brow. Diana was there. She leaned over her embroidery frame, and the light of the lamp falling straight on her face, softly shewed its fair and faultless outline. Her bright golden hair too, damp with the evening air, was bound, unbraided round her high Grecian forehead, and gave a Madonna-like aspect to her countenance, which suited better Theodore's present taste, than its usual light and laughing aspect. Her eyes were cast down, and he thought, too, dimmed by tears. She had never seemed so fair to his

sight and so dear to his heart as now, — now, when he knew he must resign her. So, turning his gaze resolutely from her, he advanced to the high-backed chair in which De Talcy was seated, and holding out the papers, he said, though his voice faltered as he did say it, “Dearer, far dearer than life, but not dearer than honour! I am poor, and I may yield to temptation; let me burn these papers then, lest, hereafter, they should burn me.” Thus speaking, he threw them all into the fire.

Old Talcy rose up, and straightway embracing him, answered, “My son, you have given me greater happiness than if you had brought me forty thousand crowns. Had you acted otherwise, never had you been son-in-law of mine. Forgive me for trying you thus; I wished only to know whether a Hugonot’s honour was bright as his courage. Go now to Diana, and tell her she has my free leave to sing your songs, and to love you as well as I do.”

I would I might here close my chronicle; if I were writing a story, I would do so: but, alas! alas! for them who trace a mortal life from the cradle to the grave! How often must they pause, to sigh over the record of hopes blighted—faith pledged, and kept in vain—love vowed, and tried, and proved unchanging, and finding an asylum only in the grave.

With a light heart, Theodore left the Chateau de Talcy. He was still poor. What then?—De Talcy had promised him his daughter’s hand; what needed he of wealth. He was a Hugonot, and unable to wield a sword in his country’s defence. What then? Might he not win fame in the service of the young and gallant Henry of Navarre?—His dearest hopes

were still unfulfilled ; but he would have pledged his life, or, yet more, his honour, on the truth of Diana : so with a light heart and cheerful brow, he went on his way.

But those were troublous times, and Theodore possessed a spirit well suited to them. Quick and fiery, ready, as the poor often are, to imagine insult even where it exists not, it might scarcely be hoped that he should traverse Poitou without engaging in a few broils by the way. The very first had well nigh proved fatal. A rude soldier, still more turbulent than himself, dared to speak slightly of his faith. Theodore challenged him, and at the first onset was disarmed, and desperately wounded. Left on the field for dead, alone, in the dreariness of an unfrequented forest, no eye to pity and no hand to aid, whither should he turn for succour and for consolation ?—in whose arms should he pray to send forth his last sigh ?—In whose, but in hers for whom alone he wished to live ? So sick and disabled, he contrived with difficulty to mount his horse, and resting often, from sheer inability to proceed, and more than once even falling insensible from his horse, he dragged his enfeebled limbs over a distance of twenty leagues, that he might enjoy the sad satisfaction of dying in the arms of his beloved one.

It was night when he reached the castle, from which, but a very few weeks since, he had departed in all the vivacity of health and hope. As he was well acquainted with the premises, he put up his tired steed himself, and then mounted a private stair-case leading immediately to the withdrawing-room, in which the old lord and his daughter usually passed the

evening. The door was half open, and Theodore stopped a moment before it, in that delightful delirium of expectation which all must have felt, who have returned after a short absence to the being they hold dearest on earth. But a different sight awaited him to that he expected. De Talcy was there—but he looked sad and careworn. Diana was there—but she had exchanged her satin robe and carcanet of pearl, for a long flowing dress of grey serge and an ebon rosary. She was kneeling before an old man of stern aspect, who sat in De Talcy's high-backed ebony chair; and she said, in a low and broken voice, "Give me time, dear uncle, only time, and I will do all you wish." In a moment Theodore was at her side, but no word or look of welcome awaited him. On the contrary, the maiden exclaiming "Theodore!" hastily withdrew from his protecting arm, and turned pale as the marble column against which she was forced to lean for support.

"And this," exclaimed the stranger with the stern countenance, "this is the bold young heretic, for whose sake you are willing to relinquish the favour of your friends in this world, and the salvation of your soul in the next. See now, silly girl, if he is willing to do the like for you. Theodore d'Aubigny, you see before you the brother of that weak, misjudging old man, and the uncle of her whose soul you have done your utmost to peril; and I, the Chevalier de Salviaty, ask you, Theodore d'Aubigny, if you are willing to resign your heresies, and enter into the pale of the Holy Mother Church? If not, I swear by this hand, that you shall never be more to that trembling girl than you are now."

"Seigneur," replied Theodore, "I have shed my best blood in defence of the religion you are pleased to style heresy, and no earthly consideration shall induce me to resign it. I am a votary of the true faith, and so, with God's help, I will remain. As to this young lady, with her father's free consent I wooed her; and only at her father's command will I resign her,—so help me, Heaven!"

De Salviaty, in a furious rage, was about to reply; but Theodore, exhausted by the severe pain of his wounds, the extreme fatigue he had undergone, and the cruel revulsion of feeling he had just sustained, sank utterly senseless on the ground, and was removed with the utmost tenderness by old De Talcy to another apartment. Weeks passed before he awaked to consciousness.

* * * * *

Winter had passed wholly away, when Theodore recovered from the delirium of a raging fever. It was still early, very early in spring; but the young leaves of the larch-trees were just opened, the birds were singing sweetly, and a glorious stream of sunlight lighted up the Gothic window of the apartment in which Theodore lay, when, for the first time, on awaking from a very deep sleep, he quietly put aside the curtains of his couch, and passing his hand over his brow, exclaimed, "Diana, where art thou?"

There was a quiet, kind-looking old woman, busily knitting by his bed-side; but she dropped her work in an extasy of pleasure, and crying out, "God be thanked! my young lord is himself again,"

hastily ran out of the room to communicate the news.

"It was a dream, was it not?" said Theodore, musingly: "a dark, hideous dream! Methought I saw Diana, pale and trembling, renounce me, and a harsh, stern bigot applauded the deed. Who was he?—could it be true!—Gracious Heaven! where am I?"—Suiting the action to the inquiry, he leaped from his couch, and began taking an accurate survey of the apartment. There was a degree of delicacy and refinement in the furniture and ornaments thereof, which seemed to indicate that it had, at some former period, been inhabited by a lady. The hangings were all of silk and strewed about the room in rich profusion. There were paintings on the walls, a few books,—and books in those days were seldom handled but by the gentler sex,—and a lute reposed on a small table of exquisite workmanship; but what put the matter beyond a doubt, was, that on raising a curtain between the windows, Theodore saw a small recess fitted up for private devotion. There was the reading-table with the huge folio open upon it, the cushion covered with crimson velvet, the rosary and silver crucifix on a table apart, and on the walls directly over the reading desk, the chastely smiling countenance of the Madonna, with the taper burning before it. A sudden thought darted into Theodore's mind, and, faint and ill as he was, filled him with rapture:—Had this been the favourite retreat of Diana herself? Looking eagerly round, his quick eye discerned a small volume bound in crimson velvet lying on the ground, half hidden by the velvet cushion. Doubtless it had been dropped

by accident, and had lain there unobserved ever since the votary had quitted the little chapel.

It proved to be a vellum manuscript, and on the first fair page was inscribed the name of "Diana de Talcy."—How often Theodore's lips pressed the precious, precious words we will not now stay to record; we will only observe, that after taking a hurried survey from the window, by way of making security doubly sure, he was forced by a sense of lassitude that would be felt, to return to his couch, and had but just drawn the curtain that he might the more securely gaze on his new-found treasure, when the old nurse re-entered the apartment.

Fragment the First in Diana's Book.

This day a young soldier has entered my father's house as a guest, who is quite unlike all the cavaliers whom I have been accustomed to see. He is young, very young; but he has not spent his days in those frivolous things wherein the young courtiers so delight. His talk is all of battles and sieges, and while he relates them his countenance lights up with animation, as if he were acting them over again, and he is persecuted even unto the death for the sake of his heresy. What pity that he is not one of us! He told us of horrible deeds done on the fête-day of holy Bartelémi, till my very blood ran cold. It is very sad to kill people thus for their belief, and I cannot help rejoicing that this young stranger escaped their cruel hands, and came to our safe—our happy castle for protection.

* * * *

Methinks my days did never pass so happily and so swiftly as they do now. I confess, to my shame and sorrow, that at first coming hither I did repine in my secret heart after the gaieties and amusements of the court, and I wearied of my dear father's long tales, and of my eternal embroidery, and wandered listlessly about the grounds, sadly retracing in my mind the gay scenes of Paris and Versailles. But D'Aubigny says it is sinful and wrong to spend a whole life in trifles and useless follies. He loves the country better than the town. His stories do not weary me as my father's did; for they all relate to the present, the active stirring present; and I weary not now of my work, for I love of all things to sit at it, when he and my father sit by and converse together. Our garden walks, too, are delightful, for he knows the name and quality of every flower that blows, and draws sweet lessons touching God's providence from them all. Oh no! never now do I sigh for the noisy, empty pleasures of the court. I was never so happy before — never in my whole life!

* * * *

This day the chevalier brought to me as a birthday offering, a volume of songs, fairly written out by his very own hand, and he calls it "Songs of Spring," because, he says, it is with me the spring of morning and the spring of life. Truly they have all the softness and warmth of that agreeable season; nevertheless, I felt so confused when he offered me his gift, that I thanked him, I fear but ungraciously. Ah! he little knows how precious, how very precious they are to me. I will never part with them—never,

never! My father was standing by, and he looked on smiling and well-pleased. My dear, dear father! Was there ever a creature in this happy world so blest as I am this day? Let me not forget to thank Him who sent me it, this night at my orisons; it is a sweet duty, the duty of thankfulness. There is a hymn of gratitude too in the chevalier's book. Surely there cannot be much difference between his religion and mine; I had well nigh forgotten there was any. Some day I will ask him to explain it to me.

* * * *

As we stood together this morning in the oriel window, a dove, pursued by a hawk, fled to us for protection. For a while it hovered between us, but, at length, it nestled itself lovingly in the chevalier's hand, and he did shelter it tenderly; one might hardly deem that the same hand has so often wielded the sword in battle; oh! the brave are ever gentle, my father said thus, and he answered: "He who noteth down the fall of a sparrow would be ill pleased if man, who more than all stands in need of mercy, should refuse to show it to the weaker things of his creation."

* * * *

Again alone, yet not in solitude, for whether I wander in our trellised grass walks, or mark the sun set from the old stone terrace, or sit with a book in my hand in our favourite oriel window, I see before me the vision of a sweet smile, and am haunted by the memory of a dear voice which quite fill up my solitude; and I may indulge in my reverie without

blame, for my father has bidden me return the affection of Theodore. My father proposed taking me to Versailles until *he* returns from Rochelle; not for worlds would I go. I love this old castle now, better than ever I did; and so does my father also. He looked quite happy when I begged to remain here: oh, how could I endure now to mix with the gay ones of the world, to listen to their idle conversation, and be forced to seem to attend to, and answer them! If I might follow my own will, I would never, never desire to leave De Talcy.

* * * *

Have I then been dreaming all this time? Gracious God! can it be possible that thou hast given me all these sweet and precious feelings, that they should be called forth and then crushed for ever! I thought I had found a treasure, and can it be that this treasure is to work my eternal destruction? My uncle says it is so, and he should know, for they say he is a just and a wise man. Yet, why should I, for the sake of a dreamy and uncertain future, resign the present certainty of bliss greater than, until lately, I had even conceived? I will not. We will seek out some yet untrodden solitude, where the breath of man shall never approach, and where there are no religious differences to weary the head and distract the heart, and there we will worship God together. The green turf shall be our altar, and the breath of morn our incense; the birds shall be our choristers, and the flowers of the field our fellow-worshippers; the whole forest our temple, and our own hearts the sanctuary wherein God shall espe-

cially dwell. There can be but one right and one wrong! we will discover the truth, and practise it together.

* * * *

Another weary day of contention. Greatly it grieves me, that at the very moment when I stand before my uncle, and wish to collect all my proofs in favour of the right, then do they all escape me. His looks are so terrible, and his words so harsh, that all my reasonings are frightened away and my heart hath no room for aught but fear. Oh, can it indeed be true, that I have drawn my dear father into error? I, his indulged child, his only, his beloved one. All else I could have borne, but this is terrible. And that dark priest too, what words did he not utter of vengeance, and eternal fires, and unimagined torments; and must mine be the hand to lead my father thither!—never, ah, never! They told me, too, that Theodore would not escape; must I bring ruin on all who love me? Ah, no, at this moment I feel that he is dearer to me than life! Better, far better, never again to hear his blessed voice—never again to behold him—than to draw down on him eternal vengeance. And what is life? it is but for a day, and the after-life is eternal: and my uncle says, that by a life of seclusion and penitence, I may win down grace for *him*, so that we shall meet again there, above this dark and frowning sky, and dwell in paradise for ever. Why are these things so? Why must the deepest, the most delightful feelings of the soul, lead us only to sin and sorrow. Yet, hush my complaints; my

uncle would call this impious, and it is impious to murmur.

* * * *

It is over now. My uncle has conquered. For myself, I feel assured that no after consideration, no dread of eternal punishment, no hope of eternal happiness, could have swayed me in my choice — could have induced me to resign the hope, and the blessing, and the glory of my life; but for my father's sake — for Theodore's sake — I will do any thing, and endure all things. I know that I deserve punishment. How often, when offering my devotions to my Creator, have my weak thoughts wandered to an earthly object. Yet, I hope,—I trust that in mercy to my sincere and deep sorrow, it will not be long. No, something in my heart whispers that I cannot live long apart from all I love.

“Holy Mary help us!” exclaimed the old nurse, who had indulged in a longer absence than usual. “What can be the meaning of this?—my young master up and dressed so early in the day! Surely your senses have quite wandered!”

“Not quite, my good friend. I really do not see why you should choose to chain down a young soldier, strong and healthy as I am now, eternally to a soft and idle couch; the good knight De Talcy would himself expel me if he were here. Can I see my worthy friend, do you think, ere I depart?”

“Alas, no, my young sir! He has been absent long. His brother, the Sieur de Salviaty would not

rest until he had persuaded my master to accompany him, far away to his own estate."

"And the young lady, Mademoiselle de Talcy, is she there too?"

"No, indeed, her uncle tried hard to persuade her, but I fear she had taken a dislike to him. She vowed she would not leave this place, unless it were to enter a convent, which, after all, I believe, better pleased her uncle, for you know, chevalier, if the lady takes the veil, these estates will be his."

"Tell me, good woman, tell me quickly, where is she?"

"She is in the convent of 'Our Lady of Sorrows:' it was her own choice, and she said she would enter none other."

"One more question, only one. How long has she been there?"

"It is now about four months since she left De Talcy."

"But four months! praised be God, then there is yet time."

It was scarcely night when the impatient Theodore stood before the convent gates. He had dismounted at some little distance, and approached on foot, with the intention, if denied admittance, of reconnoitering the building in such a manner that at a future moment he might win his way in, either by main strength of arms or in disguise. No resistance, however, was offered; on the contrary, the gates were half open, and the porters absent from her post. Although the convent stood in the heart of a thick wood, and consequently seldom was intruded on either by visitor

or wayfarer ; Theodore could not help being surprised at this very unusual want of caution. Ignorant of the state of the country,—whether still torn by two contending factions, or more tranquil than it had been prior to his illness ; he recollected many scenes of violence at which he had himself been present, when victory had for a moment decided in favour of the Hugonots, and convents had been desecrated and victims slain even at the very altar. He trembled to think of what might have happened, even here, and increased his speed. All was silent and deserted. He traversed the long corridors, passed through the refectory, and found himself in a small paved court behind the building, without having met a single creature. While he stood a moment, doubting whether to proceed or to retrace his steps ; a faint sound of slow and solemn music struck on his ear.

On the other side of the court, stood a double row of thick cypress trees ; from thence the sound proceeded. Theodore advanced thither ; he crossed the cypress walk, and entering an open door perceived that he stood in the chapel of the convent. He leaned in silence against a marble pillar, and remained for some time, an unobserved spectator of what was going on. It was a dim and mournful sight, for the few tapers that burned before the image of the Virgin, shed light only over the altar. All the rest of the building was wrapped in the deepest gloom. The nuns in their long dark robes were standing there, and singing as they stood ; or rather chanting, in low mournful voices that echoed dismally through the empty aisles. There was a pause in the melody. At

a signal made by the abbess, they all knelt and bowed their heads in prayer.

Then Theodore saw, what had before been concealed from him, that in the midst of those dark melancholy figures, there was a raised platform, and on the platform a coffin, and in the coffin—not even to his own heart dared he whisper who might be reposing there! The white robe, the white veil told him it was a novice, he forgot time and place—he forgot every thing but the one agonizing fear that maddened his very brain: madly indeed, he rushed forward—he raised the veil—it was indeed, his own Diana, changed how sadly, in her pale sepulchral beauty, from the Diana he had once beheld glowing with health, and radiant with happiness. None but the eye of love could have recognised the sleeper—but the eye of love was not to be deceived.

* * * *

It is not my intention to follow Theodore d'Aubigny through all the after events of his most eventful life. He prayed for, he wished only for death; hence he was distinguished for his reckless bravery. He dwelt in a court and spoke truth there—the voice of ambition was dead within him, and he cared not for the smiles of princes. He entered the service of Henry of Navarre, and incessantly urged that monarch to deeds of justice and of glory. On one occasion Henry asked for a new year's gift. Theodore presented a nosegay of olive, laurel and cypress, with a sonnet, the purport of which was, "Make a good peace, conquer or die." We even find him in the halls of pleasure. It is said that he composed the "Mask of

Circe." The happy love solitude. They who carry thither a never-dying sorrow, dread to be alone. We see him disgraced with his prince, for having spoken too freely, yet employed by him who could not withhold his esteem, in preparing the provinces for war, and confirming Henry's influence in Languedoc, wherein it had began to totter. He reconnoitered Nantes, surprised Montaign and Limoges, and performed exploits which forced the king to recall him to court. Four times did Henry write to his justly offended friend, and as often did Theodore burn the letters unread. Yet when he heard, that on a report of his being imprisoned at Limoges, Henry had destined some of the queen's jewels for his ransom, his generous heart relented, and he returned again to a court he had forsworn. He soon gave proof that his principles were unchanged. On being requested by Henry to write his, the prince's history, "Sire," he replied, "begin to act, and then I will begin to write."

Henry III. of France publicly insulted the queen of Navarre; the queen complained to her husband. Of all the courtiers, Theodore was the only one who dared to go to St. Germain's and demand due reparation; yet, some years afterwards, Henry was deeply affronted at being told by Ségur that D'Aubigny had spoken too freely against him. Theodore, returning from Poitou, was met by a party of his friends, who earnestly entreated him to turn back, for that the king had promised to send him to the Bastile. He, however, true and brave, took post and proceeded forthwith by a private entrance into the king's closet: "I come to know," he said, "what crime I have committed, and whether you intend to reward my

services with a tyrant's guerdon?" "You know," answered Henry, "that I love you, but Ségur loves you not: go and reconcile yourself to him." He went to Ségur, and so overwhelmed him with reproaches and threats, that Ségur exclaimed to the king, "Sire, your equerry is a better man than either you or I."

When the king had resolved to marry the Countess de Guiche, Theodore alone advised him against a measure so detrimental to his glory. For two hours did they dispute on the subject; Henry calling up as precedents every monarch with whom his memory could supply him, who had married a subject; Theodore as industriously pointing out in every example, some trifling circumstance wherein it differed from the present case. On this occasion,—on this alone, did he allude to the event that had saddened his early life. "You love, my prince," he said; "I have loved too tenderly to oppose your passion; I say only, love still; but to be happy, render yourself worthy of your mistress—be king of France, or nothing; give hours to business; to pleasure moments; seek again the friendship of those protestants whose austere countenances you dread; gain the hearts of the French, and you may do what you will afterwards." Theodore made himself master of Niort, led the forlorn-hope to the siege of Estampes, and took Maillezais, the government of which place he retained. He refused to follow Henry to the siege of Paris; but that did not prevent the Cardinal of Bourbon from being trusted to his care as a state prisoner. Du Plessis Mornay opposed this on account of the disgust D'Aubigny had received from the court. "The word of D'Aubigny," observed the king,

"though in discontent, is as good security as the gratitude of any other." The Duchess de Retz sent a messenger, who offered Theodore 200,000 crowns, or the government of Belle Isle, if he would suffer his prisoner to escape. "Belle Isle," said D'Aubigny, "would be a secure asylum, but conscience would intrude upon me even there; had you not surprised me into granting you a free conduct, I would have sent you bound hand and foot to my master."

Nor was he less faithful to the party he had espoused. At Vendome, at Saumur, at Loudon, and Chatellerault, D'Aubigny was singled out by the protestants to oppose the deputies from court in all deliberations concerning their affairs. Neither was his leisure idle: when France enjoyed at last profound peace, the warrior exchanged his sword for the pen; busied himself in writing the history of his country, and even in sporting with the lighter labours of literature. After the death of Henry, when the queen was declared regent, D'Aubigny was deputed by his province to wait upon her; the council was extremely offended that none of the Protestant deputies addressed the queen kneeling. "Gentlemen," said D'Aubigny, "owe reverence to kings; but it is to God only that they ought to bend their knees."

At the opening of the assembly of Saumur, Bois-sieres endeavoured to attach him to the court. "I shall obtain of the queen," observed Theodore, "all I wish, and that is her esteem. La Varenne in vain tempted his fidelity. One of the deputies, who had been corrupted, said to him, "What brought La Varenne to your house yesterday?—you have had a dozen conferences with him." "What," was the re-

ply, "he did at your house in the first, and could not do at mine in the twelfth."

The Duke de Bouillon, endeavouring to persuade the Protestants to resign their cautionary towns, bestowed great praises on them for having exposed themselves to martyrdom itself. "Yes, monsieur," said D'Aubigny, "they are happy who suffer for Jesus Christ. It is the character of a true Christian to expose himself to suffer martyrdom for the interest of his religion; but to expose his brethren to it, is the character of a traitor and of an executioner." These speeches are evidence for his loyalty; I must add one to show, that he was not deficient in wit. The Duke of Epemon, offended at some satirical strokes levelled at him in D'Aubigny's Second Book of the Tragiques, declared that if he could not seize D'Aubigny in his government alive or dead, he would challenge him to single combat. D'Aubigny prevented him by sending the challenge himself. The duke excused himself on account of his rank. "In France," said D'Aubigny, "we may lay down a purchased dignity, as that of a duke or peer." He was answered, that D'Epemon's numerous court would prevent him from fighting, though he should wish it. "I," said Theodore, "will secure a place of combat, even in the duke's government, and be guarantee for its security against *all* his friends."

The king, Louis XIII., having filled Poitou with his victorious troops, D'Aubigny determined to retire to Geneva. With difficulty, he escaped being arrested in the country he had served so long and so well, with sword and pen, and with a true and loyal heart. At Geneva he was received with the highest

honours, lodged at the expense of the city, consulted on all affairs of importance, charged with the care of the fortifications, and entreated to preside at the council of war. At last, came complaints from the king to Geneva, in which it was plainly hinted that D'Aubigny was a traitor; but the council took no other notice than to permit Theodore to purchase land, and build a castle, which served him as an asylum, a retirement, and defence, against ten assassins whom D'Epernon kept for ten years in the neighbourhood of Geneva. He would, perhaps, have quitted the place, but for the affection borne him by the city. The honours paid him by these good Genevese excited jealousy among the German lords; but for this, they cared not. They continued to love, to honour, and to protect him to the very last. Death came at last, gently, as if unwilling to touch so noble a victim. He said, while on his bed of sickness, to a friend who dwelt fondly on the good and glorious deeds of his life, " My friend, if I have distinguished my life more than others, it is because I have loved it less. *Her* image has never faded from my mind: on the field of battle, she has lured me into the thickest of the fight; in prison, she has inspired me with patience; in retirement, she has incited me to noble action. For all of goodness or loyalty that I possess, I have to thank the ever-present shade of her, whom I hope soon to rejoin; and blessed, indeed, am I in the prospect of death, inasmuch as I shall meet again, my first, my only love."

He died in the year 1630, aged eighty-eight, and true to the last, to the duty he owed his Maker and

his children; caused this inscription to be written on his tomb, in the cloister of St. Peter's :

“ In the name of the most good and powerful God ! My children, this is the last petition I make for you. May you enjoy the quiet I have purchased for you in the midst of storms. You will enjoy it if you serve God, and if you imitate me ; if not, you will forfeit your claim to it. This is written for you by a father, who to you has been twice a father ; by whom, and not of whom you have received your being and your happiness : to your glory if you are heirs of his studies, to your shame if you degenerate from him.”

These words are in the original Latin, expressed with singular force and brevity,—and now, you will not be at a loss to account for my frequent visits to St. Peter's. I think the character of this good man equal to any of the *preux* chevaliers, even to the far and justly-famed Bayard ; and I own, it is to me a singular satisfaction to stand on the spot where the remains of such an one repose. We muse on the virtues of the departed, until a strong desire to imitate them arises in our own heart : we think of their sufferings in the cause of truth, and envy while we pity them. Pity ! oh, no ! rather should we rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer for *Him* who died that all men might be saved ; and hope too, that in some way, either by patient endurance, or active exertion, we too may be permitted to bear like testimony to the sincerity of the faith, wherein we profess to love our Redeemer above all earthly ties. Oh ! who may tell that at such a moment, the spirit of the

departed does not hover near to inspire us with holy hopes, and with good resolves, made not in our own strength, and with thoughts which will shed over our after-hours a sweet and abiding influence. "Here lies," said I, "as I turned down the cloister, the body of as just a man, as loyal a subject, as sincere a courtier, as brave a soldier, as ever breathed the breath of life." "True," was the answer of one who loves to share my wanderings; "but you omit to mention his crowning excellence:—He was also a good Christian. He was just, because he was commanded to be perfect—loyal, because his king was his Maker's vicegerent on earth—sincere, for he worshipped the God of Truth—and brave, because he fought and bled for the support of the Protestant faith."

THE ROAD-SIDE FOUNTAIN.

There was a fountain by the road-side that led over
the Jura ; and over the fountain was inscribed,
“ *Priez pour l'ame du Soeur Caliste.*”

From an old wall of rough grey stone,
With moss and wild flowers overgrown,
A gentle spring comes gushing out,
And every drop it flings about,
Cool as a dew-drop, and as clear,
Falls with sweet music on the ear.
Drink, stranger, drink. Yet drink, and pray
For her, who placed upon your way
These cooling waters—drink and pray.

Like thee, she wandered once astray
Far from the strait and narrow way ;
A pilgrim in a world which gave—
What but its fetters to its slave.
Oh, long she wandered far and wide
From Him—her God—the Crucified !
But after many anguished fears,
And days of grief, and nights of tears,
She too was led, that stream to know
Whence “ founts of living waters flow.”

Then, holy hopes dawned on her way,—
She learned to love—she loved to pray ;
She bade to flow this cooling fount,
For the tired travellers o'er the mount,
As a thank offering unto Him,
Who filled *her* cup e'en to the brim,

Who bids all them a blessing claim
Who give cold water in his name.

Drink, traveller, drink ; yet ere you go,
Pray for the soul of her who low
Lies in the grave ; and pay thy vow
To Him who rules in Heaven, now,
Yet deigned a pilgrim here to be,
For all mankind, for her, for thee.
Drink, traveller, drink ; and on your way,
His blessing rest by night, by day.

MOUNTAIN RAMBLES.

It is very delightful sometimes to separate ourselves entirely, bodily and mentally, from the rest of the world, and amid scenes of grandeur and beauty, to endeavour to draw nigher in spirit to Him who created them. We do not at all times fully appreciate this pleasure. There is an age, when, standing on the edge of the fir-clad precipice—watching the progress of the silver mountain stream—receiving at every step fresh impressions of loveliness, feelings which swell the heart and dim the eye, and which tongue can never express,—we yet deem the enjoyment incomplete, because we cannot turn to one worshipped being who will see, and feel, and admire as intensely as we do ourselves. But those days pass away; for the vision of such companionship is the one dream of youth and inexperience, which is the first, the very first to dissolve and pass utterly away. Vain is it to seek—vain to hope on earth such foretaste of bliss. Seldom do we meet with any person who, rising above the daily cares and pursuits of earth, will look on an exquisite landscape with flushed cheek and tearful eye; and if such a being does cross our path, how speedily do the changes and chances of this ever-changing world separate us. We meet—we converse—we discover that we are worshippers at the same shrine,—that we admire the same picture—feel the same poem—love the same landscape—just begin to understand the language of a look, a smile; and straightway comes the call of interest, of pleasure, of

caprice; we exchange a hasty farewell, and, bowing to the viewless chain that drags us far as the poles asunder, part, never, it may be, to meet again. Then comes the penalty that ever follows exquisite pleasure. All things become to us wearisome. Day breaks,—we know we cannot meet again the one who would have gilt every feather of time's wings, as he flitted onwards; and we greet even the morning sun with a cheerless heart. We mix with our accustomed companions, but they do not care for the things we care for—do not love the things we love; they call our enthusiasm folly, and our deep enjoyment of the beauties of creation idleness. To us, perchance, after wandering over Fairyland, and gathering, not alone, the brightest flowers of poetry and painting; and gazing, not alone, over the pages wherein wit and wisdom are mirrored, it may seem a weariness and a vanity to converse on the duller realities of life—milk and water after champagne—cold veal after wild duck. So turning to the past, we call up fondly every word and look of the friend who sympathized in our day dreamings, and sigh to think that in all probability we shall never meet with such a friend again. Better then, far better is it to be alone in a scene like this, to ramble over these Alpine paths, companioned but by the bird of the forest and the insect of the greensward: they at least utter no discordant sound, but send up the voice of song and glad hum, as a tribute of thankfulness and praise, continually.

It seems to me that, as the air is fresher and cooler here than it is below, so also is the song of the bird more glad, and the colours of the flowers more

bright. Never, surely, did moss so brightly green as this enwreath the stem of any tree but of mountain pine; buttercups and daisies are here, which must have been transplanted from Brobdignag;—violets, primroses, periwinkles and other treasures, names unknown; large white ray-like flowers, stalkless, and lying close to the ground, as if just plucked and flung there; blossoms and bells of every colour in the rainbow, and tinted as softly, as brightly as though the pencil that tinted them had drawn its colours thence, —oh, for the power to render them immortal! flowers, those only of earth's gifts which fulfil yet more than they promise!

Turn we aside into this narrow, grassy path, down which a white kid is playfully leaping to meet us, and rest we awhile under the tall pine trees. Here is a snug little covert on the very edge of a deep ravine. There is music; what may it be?—what, but the sound, faint yet distinct, of the sheep-bell; how sweetly it comes and recedes with the breeze, rising and swelling on the ear, and anon, dying imperceptibly away; methinks there is something holy in the sound, heard in a solitude like this.—On, on! for day advances; our path is on the ledge of the rock; it is bounded on the right by lofty mountains, rugged and covered at the summit with snow; on our left is the precipice, down which we may scarcely venture to look. Yet let us stand a moment on its edge;—a fog arises, the whole valley is filled with the vapour; it rolls slowly away like a vast curtain unfolding; and what may transcend the beauty of the scene that sleeps in sweet repose, down in the fathomless valley. It is a picture, a miniature picture of a world at rest;

villages scarcely larger than emmets' nests—churches perched like eagles' eyries among the rocks, and the Rhine meandering like a silver thread in the vale. Some there are who would look on this scene with a fanciful eye, and say it was a type of the mists of ignorance and superstition, clearing away from the world, and unfolding, by gentle degrees, the beauty of the earth filled with the knowledge of the Lord.

But we approach the first refuge—a refuge! sweet and appropriate name! for to how many has it not proved a refuge and a respite from the gates of death. It was a blessed impulse that prompted the founders of these lowly edifices; and it is cheering to them, who hear much of the wickedness of this fallen world, silently to mark how Charity wandereth, silver-handed, up and down, ministering to all want, providing for every accident, soothing every sorrow, not even forgetting the tempest-driven wanderer on the Alps. And now the scene becomes wilder, and vegetation assumes a darker aspect; the goats spring playfully from height to height, and ever and anon we pass through a covered archway, cut sometimes through the solid rock, to shelter passengers from the falling avalanche:—methinks I should almost like to see one fall; to stand at a safe distance, and hear the awful silence broken by the only sound that would harmonize with the dreariness of the scene.—Aye, it is dreary: countless Alps around; some clothed with snow—now assuming a veil of green, of blue, of rose colour, pressing around and weighing one down with a sense of utter insignificance; others afar beyond the precipice, their outline almost lost among the clouds; the vast forms themselves faint

and indistinct as the shadow of a thought ; even the mountain-gentian, one of the hardiest of nature's favourites, has disappeared. There is not a flower, not a blade of grass to enliven the pathway ;—the firs, poor, stunted, miserable objects, are quite leafless ; they stand pointing their withered branches to the frowning sky, as if vainly soliciting a beam of the glad sun to warm their sapless shoots into life.—No ; vegetation is not quite at an end ; there is in some places a dry brown moss on the ground, and now and then we espy a large mass of rock by the road side, covered, as it were, with a garment of pale, bluish green lichens :—Nature loves to ornament even these rude mountain passes. This is the kingdom of silence ; and here, more especially, man seems to stand alone with his Maker ;—every thing around speaks of eternity, nothing of time !—here, man, with his busy restless fingers, has not been at work ; we might fancy ourselves the only living being who ever trod these passes ; nothing tells of change or of decay.—The waters have foamed and frothed, the snow has rested on the way-side since time begun ;—here, clouds roll on, and the giant forms around us, and the purple masses in the distance, and the snowy peaks, shining dimly afar off, impress us with a sense of our own infinite insignificance,—of the measureless power of Him from whom we derive our being. Yes, it is good to be alone in a scene like this ; self, for once, is utterly forgotten ;—Eternity is our only thought, and prayer and praise our only language !

THE INNOCENT.

NEARLY twenty years ago there lived at Martigny, a good old pastor whose name was D'Albe. He had come as a messenger of peace and love to this little mountain village, himself in the very prime of life, and well had he fulfilled his part. None knew aught concerning his former life, except that it had been much marked by sorrow; *that* they guessed from the peculiar pleasure he took in solacing the sorrows of others. His every action seemed to be guided by one motive, that of rendering service to his God by bringing his fellow-creatures to the same holy knowledge, and sweet service to which he had vowed himself. One stormy evening he was sitting in his humble study—alone, for there were none sick or wretched in the village to need his presence; it was a sad anniversary for him; so, after vainly trying to concentrate his thoughts, he shut up the huge silver clasped bible that was open before him, and laying it reverentially aside, he said with a sigh, “I must give up this one evening to the memory of the past, it is impossible to read; let me think of them to whom I must one day go,—alas! they cannot come to me;” then the old man drew nigher to the half expiring embers, and thought of his young and beautiful bride and his fair child, whom he had lost so long ago,—so long that their very names were forgotten, by all beside, but who yet lived in his memory, fair and fresh, and blooming, as though the grave had not closed over them years—long, long years ago.

He was aroused from his reverie by a low tap at his window, and a hurried call, "Papa Claude ! Papa Claude !" In another moment the good pastor was among them. Two young peasants, returning from a distant village, had passed a fallen avalanche, and fancied, as they passed, that they heard a faint moaning from beneath it. Aware that their own unassisted strength would be as nothing, they redoubled their speed towards the village, and had now come for assistance to him of whom it was never asked in vain. Five minutes had not elapsed before a band of strong mountain youths, well armed with pickaxe and shovel, accompanied by their pastor, were seen swiftly following, along the mountain path, the guidance of the two wanderers. They halted not until they reached the avalanche : then the old pastor took off his cap, and raising his eyes to Him from whom cometh every good thing, reverentially exclaimed, "Thy help, O Lord ! we entreat, if it seem good to thee, that we should succeed in this labour, for the sake of Him through whose name alone we dare approach thee !" Long and earnestly they laboured ; it would have been thought that each man expected to find some dear relation of his own within the frozen tomb : never once did they halt for breath or for repose, until they heard, or fancied they heard, a low faint moan issue from beneath—one moment of glad pause—one encouraging shout, and the labour recommenced. The avalanche had fallen upon one of those lofty sheds erected on the heights for the accommodation of the shepherds in the summer season ; the door of the humble edifice first appeared—they started, and turned pale, the foremost of the labourers, for there,

extended before the doorway, as though thrown down in the very act of leaving the shed, was the cold inanimate figure of a woman with a baby in her arms. Strong was the grasp of maternal tenderness, even in death; they could hardly unloose the cold stiff fingers that were clasped so firmly together round the little one; mother and child both dead, quite dead; yet the poor peasants could hardly believe it, and were not to be won from their fruitless cares, until another helpless object claimed them. In the farther corner of the hut, sleeping securely under two beams, that in falling in, supported each other, reposed a little fair one, still unhurt by the cold and by the tempest, if they might judge from the faint, very faint tinge of colour that yet warmed her baby lips. They roused her, and a wailing cry for her mother, gave a pang to every one of the kind hearts who felt how utterly vain was the cry. To their beloved pastor the little one was confided, and the others, bearing among them the bodies of mother and babe, reascended the path that led to their mountain village.

On the following morning the dead were decently interred, and the poor little homeless and motherless one was taken to the hospitable hearth of Papa Claude. Due inquiry was made in all the adjoining villages, but none seemed to know of the wayfarers, and at last it was concluded that the poor woman, evidently very poor from her tattered and worn garments, was indeed a homeless beggar travelling, it might be, to her distant canton.

Such an event occurring in such a secluded spot, excited much discussion, and the only individual who appeared unmoved on the occasion, was the being to

whom the fatal event was of most importance—the child, the rescued child. Too young to feel her loss, the little one readily received and returned the caresses of the kind pastor, and had scarcely been domesticated a week with him before he began to hope ardently that no tardy relations might appear to claim his adopted one. He called her Lily, not because of her exquisite fairness, but because Lily was a name enshrined in his very heart of hearts. It was the name he had loved to speak in bye-past days, when he was a fond and happy husband and father; and fervently, most fervently did he thank his Heavenly Father for sending to him this little wanderer to fill up the void in his long-desolate heart. Never once did it enter the mind of good Papa Claude, that his trifling salary, scarcely sufficient for his own support, could ill bear the additional burthen imposed upon it; he trusted to Providence for his daily bread, and trusted not in vain: his little school,—for like all these mountain preachers, he instructed, himself, the younglings of his flock,—was increased by the sons of some opulent farmers at Brigg, and his own parishioners, eager to throw in their mite towards the work of charity, seldom visited him without bringing some part of the produce of their little farms, for the child of the snow-storm. And the little Lily flourished under their care; she grew up from day to day, gentle and fair, and modest as the flower whose name she bore, and, alas! as unmindful of the benefits she received.

Many had been the trials of the good Papa's life: he had been suddenly reduced from opulence to penury; he had buried in one day the wife he had loved

from infancy, and the child who was part of his own existence ; he had exchanged the luxuries and refinements of a city for a rude and laborious life among peasants, who scarcely understood his very language ; and yet, it might be, that not one of these trials inflicted so severe a pang on his inmost soul as it felt when the consciousness first burst upon him, that the little one whom he had promised himself should console him for all, was indeed, in the touching language of that mountain spot, an "Innocent," a beautiful, a gentle child ; but one whom he could never teach to raise her little hands in prayer towards Him who had so wonderfully preserved her. But did the pastor for this reason banish the child from his home, or from his heart ? Oh, no ; his actions, though often proceeding from feeling, were guided by principle, by that pure and holy principle which leads men to study and follow the dictates of a will, holier and purer than their own. He regarded his little nursling as more peculiarly thrown in her helplessness on his protection by the hand of Providence, and sought the more earnestly to anticipate and provide for her wants and wishes.

He loved well to lead her forth in the bright summer weather, and wearied never of telling her the names of the flowers and insects again and again, albeit his labour was a vain labour ; and when Lily stamped with childish earnestness, and with passionate tears, begged him to gather the blue gentians and put them again in the sky, whence they had fallen, he chided not her waywardness, but caressed and gently soothed her into peace.

One of the villagers gave Lily a white goat, and

henceforward it was her constant companion, and it was a daily amusement to wreath flowers for her goat's neck, and to lead him to the sweet mountain springs and short pasture. Sometimes she was found by the pastor sleeping in the bosky dells that abounded near their dwelling, wearied with the heat, and never, never alone, for an instinct of gratitude kept her four-footed companion near at hand. Well did Papa Claude love to watch his darling while she slumbered, for she was wont, when sleeping, to smile and murmur broken sounds, and the pastor loved to think that her spirit might perhaps be permitted to wander in dreams towards those bright and blessed regions, of which, waking, she could not conceive, and oh, how fervently would he then pray, that ere he should himself be summoned to depart, his efforts might be rewarded with one—only one gleam of intellect in the child, to show they had not been all utterly vain!

One sweet summer morning, Lily, instead of wandering forth to her usual mountain haunts, sat alone and dejected, her face buried in her hands, on a garden seat in the little enclosure behind the pastor's dwelling;—garden it might scarcely be called, for, often as flowers had been placed therein, and duly trained and tended, the child, in the perversity of an unoccupied mind, had uprooted them; so that at length the smiling parterre became a mere grass-covered terrace, green and retired, and cool, the pastor said, and therefore quite as pleasant for his hour of morning and evening retirement, as though decked with the choicest of their Alpine treasures.

"Are you not going into the sunshine, Lily?" said

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he, on the morning in question. "It is a bright and cheerful day."

"No, no;" said the child, raising her hand, and pointing to the blue sky above; "there is a storm in the air,—it will presently be here."

"No fear of a storm to-day, Lily," replied her friend. "Come up these steps with me; we will go to the terrace, on the roof of the house; there you can see all around; there is not the shadow of a cloud on the bright blue sky."

But Lily was not to be persuaded or moved; she answered again, "There is a storm coming;" and then rocking to and fro, she began singing a low, mournful melody.

So the pastor went his way; but being anxious respecting the child, he would not begin a long walk he had projected until he had seen her again.

In something less than an hour, he again stood beside her. She was still singing her sad melody; but she broke off at his approach.—"Hark!" she exclaimed, whisperingly; "do you not hear it rumbling?—Save me, save me!"

In vain Papa Claude strained his listening ears;—not a sound broke on the quiet summer noon, and the sky was still cloudless: he carried the child down in his arms to the door of the house, thinking to change the current of her ideas.

"Hark!" she exclaimed, as soon as she had freed herself from his arms;—"Do you not hear it? do you not hear it?"

And a low, rumbling sound, as of rushing waters, was heard, not only by Papa Claude, but by all the

villagers who were at leisure to listen. Not long were they left in doubt. A cry was heard—

“The waters are coming! the torrents have swollen the mountain stream! we shall be lost, lost!”—

And some strained their sight to the utmost, as if eager to meet the coming danger; others threw their arms about in wild dismay; while the women, tender and true to nature, embraced their little ones, and pressed them still more closely to their throbbing hearts:—some among them, without waiting for treasure or thinking of friend, commenced a hasty and fearful march up towards the summit of the mountain, as though their trembling step could outrun the speed of the rushing torrent;—others chose rather to perish by their own hearth-stones. Rapidly, rapidly the waters came on, gathering strength as they proceeded, and silently, like the spirit of destruction, overwhelming every object that appeared for one moment to obstruct their progress,—chalets, trees, flocks, screaming men, and helpless children, were alike swept away.

A small band of villagers had taken refuge in the Pastor's house, and they stood there watching death as it approached them. Suddenly, the love of life, strongest at the last moment, impelled them to fly, to escape, though but for a second, the raging waters. Papa Claude was about to follow, but his steps were arrested. A small hand, strong in its impotence, was laid on his arm, and a clear and firm, though childish voice cried out, “Pray, my father, pray!—What can we do but pray!”—And the child, without loosing her hold, turned round and ascended the steps that

led to the roof. All the fugitives, as though yielding to a supernatural impulse, followed; and there, on the roof of the lowly cottage, with bowed heads and on bended knees, they prayed. The pastor was in the midst of them, and the child Lily kneeled by his side; her countenance, vacant no longer, upturned towards the sky; her dark eyes, beaming with intellect, spoke faith, and hope, and resignation; and her lip, trembling, yet eloquent, spoke as though the treasured petitions of years had been withheld, only to be poured forth now in the hour of extremest need. Suddenly, the beating hearts were stilled in the intensity of dread; the rushing of the waters approached; it passed them by—passed them by in safety, while hundreds of their fellow-villagers were swept off by the streaming torrent! The accent of prayer was changed for that of subdued thanksgiving; the eloquent words of Lily were stayed; her head sunk in the folds of her mantle; she pressed convulsively the hand of Papa Claude; murmured fondly “Thanks, oh, my father!” and sunk powerless in his arms. Every member of the little band arose, with streaming eyes and thankful hearts,—thankful for their own wonderful preservation, but mournful because, in that moment of fearful excitement, the soul of the Innocent had passed away!

EVENING THE THIRD.

Italia! oh Italia! Thou who hast
The fatal gift of beauty,

. .. .

Thou art the garden of the world, the home
Of all art yields and Nature can decree ;
Even in thy desert, what is like to thee ?
Thy very weeds are beautiful ! thy waste
More rich than other climes' fertility ;
Thy wreck a glory, and thy ruin graced
With an immaculate charm which cannot be defaced.

BYRON.

INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

Milan.

ITALY, lovely Italy, rich art thou in the external
beauty with which thy Creator has endowed thee !
It might seem that thy profusion of outward orna-
ment — sun-touched crag — smiling valley — po-
lished city — rainbow-tinted foliage — radiant flowers
and abundant fruitage, were enough to satisfy the
eye !

It might seem that thy soft luxurious climate —

thy sun, calling up all nature to life and light, and imparting some portion of its warmth and brilliance to every living creature, dressing every face in smiles, and sending the blood in quicker circulation through the veins, were enough to satisfy the heart! Yet are all these fair and lovely things among the least of thy endowments, oh thou Eden of this faded and fallen world!

Among thy marble fanes did the spirit of painting in olden days choose his dwelling-place, and though he be now departed, yet do we still meet at every step the lingering traces of his foot-prints. At every step we meet with forms of imperishable beauty, which show us, what human nature in its perfection of loveliness and strength might be. O'er thee the angel of poesy did hang entranced, and stay her rapid flight, while the rich droppings that fell from her ambrosial wings did sink with power to purify and soften on the spirits of thy inhabitants, and straightway were they endued with power to see and to appreciate all holy and beautiful sights and sounds in nature.

Lovely Italy! lovely Italy! what tribute shall they pay, whose great happiness it is to gaze on thee in the sweet spring-time of their own youth, ere yet the desolating storms of passion have visited their hearts with power to blast and to destroy its sweetest impulses; ere yet experience of hope's falsehood and satiety of earthly enjoyment have chilled their first holy enthusiasm; ere yet the toils and cares of earth, the necessity of providing for the morrow, have dimmed their perceptions of the noble and beautiful?

This tribute shall they pay. They shall not conclude their first rapturous day upon thy land without recording thy praise, and adding a floweret, lowly though it be, to the wreath which travellers and poets of all ages and of all lands have twined for thy adornment.

Even while descending the mountains that separate this garden of the earth from the duller world beyond, did we perceive that we were treading a new earth, and breathing a purer atmosphere. Instead of the rugged mountains crowned with snow — the pine-clad precipice — the frowning ravine, down which one may not look without a shudder — the desolate refuge — leafless branches, and brown, dry moss, and pale, pale lichen — bare earth and gloomy sky, which had greeted us on our ascent, we beheld rocks richly coloured, red, and purple, and amber, ornamented with moss and shrubs of the most vivid green,— greener, as Emmy observed, than the fairies' dresses. Now, a cascade foaming and frothing; then a simple bridge of Alpine construction. Anon, we entered a long covered passage, whose entrance, formed of rough, shapeless stones, gave it the appearance of a bandit's cave; then we burst out into life and light, and, perhaps, came suddenly upon a pretty white cottage, on a velvet lawn of soft, green grass, with goats skipping about, and peasants dressed, as though just fresh from Arcady, with long, deep, straw baskets buckled on their shoulders. Flowers spring here, brilliant and abundant as though they were the dewdrops of the morning, petrified while yet reflecting the sun's earliest radiance. Even the names of the towns we passed through, Isella,

and Domo d'Ossola, and the inscriptions over the doors, sounded like sweet music. We went through a market-place; the girls were dressed in their holiday garb, and one man passed by clad in a white robe, with a large, scarlet cape, and a white pigtail hanging down between his shoulders. He was a servant of the church. At Isella, we bought, for a few sous, as much fruit as we liked to carry off with us: here, too, the vines are real southern vines, such as the Latin poets describe; not like the miserable bushes of France, but growing to their natural height and trained over high lattice-work, or still more gracefully flinging, at their own sweet will, their wild tendrils over mulberry, and orange, and chesnut trees.

A change has come over the spirit even of our postillions. Instead of the clumsy, ragged, seven-league-booted gentlemen who escorted us through the highways of Burgundy, and who never failed to elicit most ominous growls from Violet's aristocratic pet Frà, we have now a smart dapper little person with a fine horn fastened to his shoulder by a splendid tassel, who answered some trifling question of May's in Italian,—in Italian, the language of poetry and romance. How odd it seemed to hear this language, in our own island spoken only by the highly born and highly educated, from the mouth of a peasant.

"And this is Italy!" said May pettishly, as we assembled for supper in the little saloon of the hotel at Bavéno. "Cold stuccoed floors that chill one's very heart,—comfortless walls covered with *jootmoot* latticework, tantalizing one with vain dreamings of spring flowers and summer fruits,—horrid unnatural paint-

ings of birds, ugly enough to frighten Frà,—macaroni and larks for supper,—I am sure I see nothing so charming in Italy!"

"Nothing, May!" cried little Emily, holding up a handful of wild clove-pinks and periwinkles, fresh and fragrant, "would you gather these in the hedge-rows at home?"

"Weeds!" answered the young lady, in a tone that made Frà Diavolo start and wag his tail.

"Nothing, May!" said her sister: "is it nothing to tread the land that Ariosto trod; nothing to breathe the air that Petrarch breathed; nothing to tarry in the city wherein Raffaele dwelt?—oh, May!"

"Is it nothing to look on such a scene as this?" said Harry, gently drawing the discontented lady forth into the balcony, on which the windows of our apartment opened. It was a scene to calm every murmur, even though the murmur had proceeded from so legitimate a cause as a cold supper.

Almost immediately under the balcony stood a white cottage, covered with a luxurious vine. It was close to the shores of the Lago Maggiore; the low mountains that skirt the lake had lost their clear, sharp outline beneath the softening hues of twilight. Isola Madre slept on the quiet waters, like a spot sacred to peace; not a sound was heard, but the musical rippling of the wave, while high above, the clear bright moon sat like a throned pearl in the deep sky, shedding her soft brilliance far and wide over the still waters.

I stood in the balcony of the little inn, gazing on this fair soft scene, and acknowledged that at last my long-cherished hopes were fulfilled. I was in Italy;

but did the realization of my day-dream bring with it happiness? Alas! alas! even in that entranced hour, I sighed, vainly sighed for the presence of those dear ones, whose love had been unknown to myself, until lost,—the wellspring of my happiness,—the life of my life. It is not in any aspect of nature, however lovely,—it is not in any music, however sweet,—it is not in any delight addressed to eye or ear, to give happiness. Happiness, whose seat is in the heart, we must seek in the hearts of our fellow pilgrims: the sympathising word,—the kind smile,—the warm clasp of the hand,—these are the things which make any spot a home, and any home, however lowly, a paradise.

I remembered the days when I was not alone in my joys and griefs, and dreaming of the merry hours we had spent together,—of the bitter, bitter parting pang,—of the cloud which since then had fallen on my spirit, making the fair face of nature a sealed book, and life itself a weariness. The vine-wreathed trellice sleeping in the moonlight, castle and cot, and beautiful lake passed away like a vision from my tear-dimmed eyes; my merry companions had left me, and I knew it not; I awoke from my reverie and found myself alone.

Morning arose, bright and beautiful, and dismissing the carriages at Arona, we scrambled up a steep bank by the road side, and “Italy!” again burst from more than one of our party, when, having gained its summit, we looked down on mount and lake, noble castles, ruined arches, and deserted temples. Our purpose was to see the enormous statue of S. Carlo Borromeo, which crowns the wooded height

near Arona, but we did not follow the example of our countrymen who mounted into his saintship's pericranium and dined in his head.

At Sesto Calende, the women had their hair fastened up with large silver bodkins. Three or four young girls with an old woman, crowded round our carriage, while we stopped to change horses, and after pointing out to us a marriage procession that was passing down the street, and asking a few questions respecting whence we came, whither we were going, and so on,—the old woman proceeded to inform us that she intended giving a little ball in the evening, and if we would but change our purpose of proceeding to Milan and honour her with our company, she would do her best to amuse us. There was a warm-hearted kindness in her manner, and in the proposal altogether, that struck me as being marvellously different from the prudent proper distance at which we English folks keep foreigners and strangers. As a farther inducement, she pulled forward one of her young companions, and told us she was from Milan, and a counsellor's daughter. We afterwards learned that this good lady was a schoolmistress, and actually one of the principal people in Sesto Calende.

The moon rose long before we reached Milan, and some of our party, recollecting the robberies on this very road, that took place last week, felt rather nervous. Sir Mark held his pistols, primed and loaded, ready to fire off at the first villain who should spring from behind the hedge. Harry amused the children, by relating to them all the horrid murders of which he had ever heard, or which his invention could furnish. Little Agnes shut her eyes, and thought

herself safe ; and I, having nothing to lose, felt marvellously quiet, and gave myself up, heart and soul, to admiring the clear sky and delicious moonlight of Italy. Nevertheless, we were none of us sorry when the carriage wheels were again clattering over the round rough stones, and we drove under the arched gateway of the court-yard of the hotel.

“What!” said May, “is this the hole we are to sleep in?” as the trim waiter, after showing us into our dormitory, left us to inspect it at leisure. Even my heart sunk within me, as I looked round ; and lest you should think it is all *dolce far niente* with travellers, I send you a sketch of this right pleasant apartment in one of the first hotels of Milan. It had been splendid, perhaps, in the days of Noah ; for though small, it was lofty, and there were gilt mouldings and cornices, now all broken and decayed. A bed, a crazy set of drawers, one cane fauteuil, without a cushion, a stand, with a broken basin, and a tarnished mirror, composed its furniture ; all as dirty as might be ; while the stone floor, cold and uncarpetted, completed the comfortable aspect of the whole. However, we soon procured from the waiter,—for there was not a woman, either mistress or maid-servant belonging to the establishment,—materials wherewith to change all this ; and after being awakened some half dozen times by Italian serenading, and by the great bell of the cathedral close by, we slept the travellers’ dreamless sleep !

The next day was a grand fête-day,—“All Saints,” and we found amusement enough in watching the people returning from mass. Such groups ! so novel, and so odd ! Austrian soldiers, friars, with their

three-cornered hats ; ladies, covered with the graceful black Milanese veil ; peasant-women, adorned with silver bodkins, and large shining tiara-like combs. Harry's pencil was hard at work the whole morning. May and I went to hire a piano, and all the people of the house were gone to mass ; not a creature even to open the door to us. So *en attendant*, their return, we drove out of the city, and went to look at Napoleon's triumphal arch. May asked the laquais, thinking that in this classical country even he would be able to answer such a question, whether the columns were Corinthian.

" Corinthian, signora !" he answered ; " certainly not, the stone came from Simplon !"

We finished our morning with a visit to the Brera, and I could write a folio on all the treasures it contained ; but I will not torment you, who are never likely to visit that storehouse of beauty. So I will but say one word of Vandyck's portraits, of Raffaele's St. Catherine, absolutely enshrined in gold, and of Crivelli's St. Peter, whose keys are of massive gold and silver, rising in bas-relief, full an inch above the canvass, and who sports real gems on his glove and on his vest. Conceive St. Peter wearing gloves !—the good saint has an especial sharp eye, which seems to follow you, go where you will. I suppose he has lived long enough to find that man is a purloining animal, and has a great affection for the glittering treasures of the mine. If I were a thief, and came to the Brera, I would not steal St. Peter's jewels. No, no, the Brera contains a far richer treasure, and I really would not answer for my honesty were I left alone with Guercino's Hagar—lovely Hagar ! It is

not only the face of perfect beauty that fixes the attention, it is the meek look of feminine tenderness, deprecating, yet no wise resenting the unkindness of her lord, while the eyes, red and tearful, the temples swollen with weeping, the hand fondly encircling her beloved one's head, show the bitterness of the mortal conflict she endures. Grief, the disfigurer, does not disfigure her, for with her dishevelled hair and sorrow-speaking countenance, she exceeds, not only in interest, but also in fair feminine loveliness, the happier and prouder beauties in the room. I could have spent days before it,—aye, liked it even better (tell it not) than the ruined remnant of Da Vinci's Cenatola.

It was some comfort to know that all this admiration was not misplaced ; for I hear that in the olden time, when this picture was at Bologna, it was a common thing for men of all ranks to make a pilgrimage thither, for the sole purpose of viewing it.

Harry Dormer, who loves every thing extremely absurd, brought us home this morning copies, taken I imagine under the rose, of two extraordinary productions. The one was a drawing of that celebrated monster of Leonardo's, carved while he was yet a boy, for one of his father's peasants. The young lover of mischief intended it to have the effect of Medusa's head on all beholders. Accordingly, he collected every kind of viper, adder, lizard, and toad that he could meet with, and copying the peculiar deformity of each, wrought the piece of knotted wood into a monster, that seemed to flash fire from its eyes, and infect the very air it breathed.

The other curiosity was a mere pencil sketch of one of the meetings of the society of the Pajuolo. A

society perhaps unique of its kind in the civilized world.

You, dear Minna, who profess the most perfect indifference for every thing beyond mere bread and water, will hardly believe that a party of twelve men, —men of talent and learning, met every week, for the mere purpose of eating a sumptuous supper, and devising each one how he could, in profusion or in oddity, out-do the others. The society took the name of “Pajuolo,” because their convivial meetings took place in a vast copper, round the interior of which the seats were placed. The sketch under discussion was of a supper given under the superintendence of Andrea del Sarto; and the dish, *par excellence*, imitated a temple, of which the columns were sausages, the reading-desk cold meat, the pavement coloured jellies; while in the chorister stood, for singers, some fine fat thrushes, with open beaks, dressed in cassocks of bacon: the pulpit was occupied by a stuffed goose; and a plump pigeon, with six ortolans duly arrayed, represented the sovereign and his court. Now I do hope you will never call the poor, dear, innocent London Aldermen biped pigs again. Their freaks are nothing, compared to this one of the Italian painters and scholars.

The festival of the good St. Carlo Borromeo took place last week. I could fill pages with a description of his gorgeous sepulchre, and the cathedral raised over it; but I spare you.—Any traveller's guide-book will do for a reference; I will only tell you that, when we first, in the faint twilight of a dark November morning, entered the Duomo, and gazed upwards on the exquisite tracery of its fretted roof, wrought of

white marble, delicately and finely as the finest point lace, and looked through archway after archway down the middle aisle, each compartment lighted but by a single painted window, until the eye was lost in gloom,—then round upon the pale forms of mailed warrior and kneeling virgin, wanting nought but the glow of life,—while all the time, strains of solemn music, breathed forth by invisible musicians, rose gradually, till every aisle and chapel in the vast building echoed back the deep hymn, and, anon, died away in soft, lingering cadences, till the sound was fainter than the beating of one's own heart,—the mind itself was bowed down by a sense of insignificance, and the very spirit was oppressed almost to tears.

Violet was the first to speak.—“This is, indeed,” she said, “a temple worthy the living God!”

“Look there!” said Harry; “are *they* worthy to be worshippers in such a sanctuary?”

A procession was winding along towards the high altar,—a procession of all the saints from the different churches in Milan, who, borne aloft with banner and cross, had come to pay their respects to S. Carlo, a sort of grandee among them. Some of the little boys, who swung incense as they moved on, had large painted wings stuck on their shoulders! I need scarcely tell you, that all our highly-wrought feelings evaporated at this sight, and that we turned in haste to leave the Duomo. Neither Violet nor I could forgive Mr. Dormer the whole day, for pointing out this absurdity to us.

The following day happened to be Sunday, and we went to join a family party at morning prayers, in the hotel Britannique. We assembled in a plainly-

furnished room ; there was neither picture nor statue, nor marble monument of other days, to excite the feelings ; and the only music to be heard was the simple song of praise and thanksgiving, breathed forth from true hearts. But we looked around on countenances beaming with devotion,—on fellow-worshippers of the God whose chosen temple is in the hearts of his children,—on members of the same visible church, who, scattered abroad in a foreign land, far from the altars at which their kindred were kneeling, had met on this day, the universal Sabbath, as brethren, to join hand and lip and heart, in praise and prayer, and to exchange words and looks of kindness and good will among each other.—We listened to the simple and touching language of our beautiful liturgy, and gave utterance to the same prayers which our forefathers uttered before us, and which our children will breathe forth when we are at rest ; and we felt the immeasurable superiority of the religion of the Spirit over the religion of outward forms and splendours.

I have heard,—can it be true—that some people complain of the tediousness of repeating the same form of prayers, Sunday after Sunday, and wish even to abolish the use of our Liturgy. Is it nothing for the wanderer in far-off lands to know, when the holy day arises, that his kindred and friends, wherever they may be,—some tossing on the rough ocean,—others, quietly assembling in the haunts of his childhood, shall on that morning breathe forth the same praises and thanksgivings as himself?—Will it nothing tend, think you, dearest Minna, to keep the heart of the exile free from the vanity, the frivolity,

perchance from the idolatry with which he is surrounded—to picture to himself, when the Sabbath sun streams in at his casement, the far-off nook in green England, wherein the grey-headed old father, and the gentle mother who bore him, and the innocent fair-haired sisters have met together, to pray for the well-being of the absent one? Oh, yes; he will take up his prayer-book—his mother's birth-day gift, wherein her own dear hand has traced his name; and though he be absent in body, yet will he be present in spirit; and while he breathes forth the same words that ascend from the village church at home, he will be grateful that he, too, is a child of the Church of England.

Among the innumerable interesting tokens of the bye-past, which people Milan as with a host, there is none, in my opinion, more interesting than the tomb of Francesco Sforza and his wife Bianca. Every one knows the story of Francesco, the son of the Peasant of Cotignola, who, succeeding to the generalship of his father's Condottieri, won his way by prudence, bravery, gentleness, something aided by what men call good fortune, but which was in fact nothing more than a diligent improvement of every passing occurrence, to the throne of Milan.

His stormy youth was passed in the battle field; and Piccinino, the great Milanese captain, bore ample testimony to his bravery. He was rewarded by the smiles of beauty, for Bianca was the loveliest, as well as the most accomplished princess of her day; but even then, this first wish of his heart fulfilled, his couch was not a couch of roses.

Piacenza,—Casal Maggiore,—Caravaggio, by turns acknowledged the strength of his valour; and it was after taking the last-named city, that he showed how true generosity ever accompanies true bravery. Donato, the Venetian, preferred surrendering himself after defeat to the victor, to returning home to the Council of Ten; and Dandolo, who had even sought Sforza's life, was forgiven and kindly treated.

In the same spirit, when he had subdued the Milanese by famine, till at last they were forced to admit him: by his command, every horseman of his train carried with him bread on his lance, for the starving citizens; and still true to himself, Francesco refused the triumphal car and the royal canopy, and soldier-like, on his own good steed, his wife and his fair children at his right hand, he assumed his sovereignty.

For sixteen years, Francesco ruled with gentleness and prudence the land he had won, step by step, with the sword; and having raised his family to an equality with the proudest princes of the south, he quietly prepared for the better land. And now the lovely features of Bianca's character shone forth. She who had shared with pride the brilliant days of her husband, laid the princess by, and hung tenderly over the warrior's sick couch; her hand alone allayed the fever of his brow,—her hand alone presented the medicine to his parched lip,—and when she knew that all was vain, and that her lord was indeed about to pass through that dark valley, where alone she might not follow him, she dried her tears, and put off her lamentations to a future day; she sent messengers to her son Galeazzo, and ambassadors to Venice; assembled a council in the dead

of night, and unmoved, apparently, she proposed measures for the maintenance of popular tranquillity, and talked to the senators calmly, though all the while her heart was rent with agony.

When all was over, and the claims of public duty were satisfied, then, and then only, she prayed to be alone with her dead, and gave way to her woman's feelings. A few short months reunited her to her husband: and even in the carved figures on their monument, the folded hands and earnest gaze seem rather addressed to him she so loved on earth, than to Heaven. How delightful it is, in the crime-stained annals of Italy's many masters, to meet with this beautiful picture of conjugal tenderness; and to behold, in the stormy times immediately succeeding the death of the last Visconti, when Milan was claimed by four different individuals, among contests, intrigues, and battles, this one pattern of true and tender love.

I can hardly imagine that this gentle and lovely Bianca could be the mother of two such sons as Galeazzo Maria the bad, who, for his tyranny, was stabbed in the portal of St. Stephen's church,—and Ludovico Il Moro, the bold and ambitious, who scrupled not to bargain with the Emperor Maximilian for his own nephew's inheritance. Bianca Maria, the niece of Ludovico, and sister of Giovan Galeazzo, married the Emperor of Austria. Maximilian received four hundred thousand florins as his wife's dowry, and in return invested the regent with the duchy of Milan.

Among the treasures of Milan, is still to be seen a book of Latin exercises, written by Ludovico's eldest

son Maximilian, the illustrations of which let us into the secret of the young prince's studies and amusements. In one he is seen chasing butterflies; in another toying with a pet bird, while his tutor vainly endeavours to recal his attention to his books; in a third he is represented as doing homage to his cousin Maximilian of Austria; in a fourth caressing his dogs. These miniature sketches are believed to be painted by some of Leonardo da Vinci's scholars:—nay, some of them, it is said, are the work of that great artist himself. You may believe that I looked over this book with deep interest; there is so much power in association,—in a name.

Mr. Dormer was examining, with the eye of a worshipper, a sketch, which appeared to me a mere sketch.—“It is by Leonardo,” he said.

“A mere scratching of white and black chalk,” answered May; “bold and free, and graceful, I admit; but a mere scratch.”

“This chevalier, who handles his lance so well, while seated on horseback, is Bayard,” he replied; “taken prisoner while pursuing some fugitives into the city of Milan,—so recklessly, that the gates were closed on him before he was aware that he had outstripped his companions. This princely figure is Ludovico Il Moro, who restored to the noble prisoner his horse, his arms, his liberty, without ransom, because of his gallant bearing, he being yet a mere youth.”

“And the horse?” eagerly enquired May;—“was it that good steed Carman, almost as renowned as his master, who would suffer no hand to dress his wounds, save his master's only?”

"No, no;" replied Harry, laughing. "It were too much to expect every figure to be a hero of romance. Carman was given to Bayard by the Duke of Lorraine, at the siege of Brescia, which took place some years afterwards."

"Do not look so disappointed, May. I have not a shadow of a doubt that this horse also was a most renowned horse in his day, although tradition has not preserved his name. Fame, you know, is a very capricious deity."

During our walk home, we passed a procession of men, women, and children, walking in pairs, and following a cross raised on high, singing as they went most discordantly. It was melancholy to watch their vacant stare and wandering glances, and think of them as being engaged in a religious duty. We entered the church after them; the priest was preaching, and he said, "Would you like to fall into a great fire, and perish there in lingering agony?—would you like to see the companions of your early days pass by, without giving you a thought? Certainly not. Stretch out your hands, then, to your brothers who are now in purgatory, and help to relieve them; you must pay us liberally, and we will pray them into peace."

This specimen, my dear Minna, of the good padre's oratory, will content you, as it contented us; for we staid to hear no more. In one of the little side chapels stood a Donna di Rosaria of carved wood; two figures also of wood knelt before her, and they were laden—heavily laden, poor things!—with the presents that had been brought by the contadine to the Virgin; caps, flowers, ribands, pieces of lace, and among other

things, a cravat. If there is one error of the Roman Catholic faith more excusable than another, (at least in the frail judgment of woman) it is that which dignifies and enthrones that personification of all purity and tenderness, the Virgin; and it is painful when this feeling, in its extreme of absurdity, excites ridicule. It seems to me a very natural error for woman to bend the knee, and raise the prayer for pity to her, who, while on earth, suffered as we suffer;— who walked in mild beauty through her lowly home; administering comfort; solacing sickness; providing for temporal wants; bending over the slumbers of her child, even as though that child had not been the Omnipotent, veiled in mortality! It is not wonderful that the poor, and the unlearned, and the feeble, and the desolate should bend before the Virgin's shrine, with a feeling more nearly allied to love than awe,— more like hope, and less like fear, than that with which we bow down before the Holy of Holies.— Minna, almost I could bend the knee myself, if I were not afraid that reverence would be mistaken for adoration; for she is consecrated in poesy, is she not? as the star which guides the wanderer over the pathless deep.

THE BROTHER'S RANSOM.

A GREAT many years ago there came an old warrior of the Borromean family to enjoy a few months of peace and repose in the castle that stands on the 'Beautiful Island,' which sleeps on the Lago Maggiore. The Conté Montalva was accompanied to his retreat by his only child, the Lady Rosa ; a creature so gentle and lovely, that not her father only, but every person who had access to her, united in giving her the pet name of Rosa Bella.

The old Conté had passed all his life, except the one short interval of twelve months immediately succeeding his marriage, in the battle-field. His wife had died in giving birth to her first child, and since that time he had fought with more obstinacy and bravery than ever, because he wished to die. All his time had been spent among rough soldiers since the mournful day that consigned his heart's treasure to the tomb, and until now he had not dreamed that there existed the creature whom he could learn to look upon with love and tenderness. But his fair child was the living image of her mother ; and as the Conté watched her light figure moving gracefully among her birds and flowers, and listened to the joyous carolling of her merry voice, he forgot tented field and battle plain, and musing mournfully on the buried days of his short-lived happiness, he would call his dear one to him, and embracing her half in tears and half in smiles, he would promise to himself

to love her henceforward as he had loved her mother ; and he did so, and she became to him the delight of his eye and the treasure of his heart.

When they had been dwellers on the Beautiful Island about six months, the birth-day of the Lady Rosa drew nigh, on which she should complete her sixteenth year. The Conté determined to give on this occasion a festival, which should surpass in magnificence every festival that had hitherto been seen or heard of. Every body, high or low, within reach, was invited. Early in the evening of that day the tranquil lake was quite alive with boats, bearing guests of all ranks and ages to the palace. The palace, nay, the whole island, was brilliantly illuminated ; music breathed forth from every open window, and from every green arcade. The air was heavy with the fragrance of lemon and orange trees, then in full bloom ; the beautiful salvia splendens, so abundant in this island, trailed its rich scarlet blossoms over arch and colonnade ; tables were spread luxuriously, in the palace for the aristocratical part of the assembly ; in the gardens for the peasantry. It was like an Armida's hall and bower called into existence from the depths of the dark waters. But none of all the guests, noble or plebeian, thought of the beauty of palace or garden bower, after their eyes had once rested on the surpassing loveliness of old Montalva's daughter.

" Brother," said a young maiden, to a noble looking cavalier, on whose arm she leaned, as they stood together to rest a few minutes after rambling all over the gardens,— " Brother, is *this* the splendour and gaiety which you so often covet for my sake ? Let us

go home : I am happier in our lowly abode, than here ; my eyes ache with all this light, and the music oppresses me."

"What, Laura!" said her brother, "and if the choice were in your power, would you not like to be as beautiful as the lady Rosa Bella?"

"Would you love me better than you do now, Leo, if I were fair as she is?"

Her brother answered by a look that sunk into her very heart ; and she said, as they turned slowly away, "No, no ! I would rather be your dear and merry little Laura, than the possessor of Lady Rosa Bella's wealth and loveliness."

The brother and sister were separated by the festivities of the evening, and did not converse again, till they stood side by side in one of the grottoes that support the raised terraces behind the palace, facing the sea, where they waited the arrival of their boat. Their talk was again of the Lady Rosa Bella ; but this time Leo might scarcely be said to mingle in it, for he was silent and abstracted.

"I am so glad it is over," said his young sister. "You asked me, a while since, if I would like to be the Lady Rosa Bella. Leo, I marked her well ; her bright eye danced with triumph when she looked on the crowd around her, but it did not turn with answering love on any. How should it ? she can never be quite certain whether they love her for herself alone, or for her broad lands and rich dowry. And her father, too,—they say, that although his child is dear to his heart, his bags of gold are dearer still. Oh ! she cannot be happy ; at least, not happy as I am in our humble home, where we love each other so truly !"

The speaker might perhaps have continued longer in the same strain, for it was one she delighted to indulge in ; but she was interrupted by a low deep sigh, proceeding from the inner part of the cave. They both started, and turning round, perceived what had hitherto in the gloom escaped their notice. A low kneeling figure in the farthest recess of the cavern. The figure arose and advanced towards them. She had cast off her embroidered mantle and gem-starred coronet, and wore only a plain white robe ; her cheek had lost its bright flush, and her eye its proud glitter, yet her features of exquisite beauty could not for a moment be mistaken. It was Bella Rosa who stood before Leo and his sister.

"Who art thou, young girl?" she said in a voice subdued and sweet, as the faintest note of music. "Who art thou, that readest so well the secrets of the heart upon the countenance?"

"I am, as you say," answered Laura, "but a weak and unskilled girl, but I have learned the lessons of adversity, and she gives wisdom even to the youngest of her children. Aye, and she gives sweet pleasures too. It is adversity, lady, that has knit my brother and me so closely together, that we live but in each other's life."

"Is it so?" said Bella Rosa, inquiringly. "Would I had a brother—such a brother! How willingly would I exchange carpetted hall and garden bower, for lowly cottage and greenwood shade, so that my home was gladdened, and my heart warmed with the blessed light of love!"

All this time, Leo, drawing a little apart, had stood, leaning against the rough stone pillar that supported

the arched entrance of the grotto, looking on the fair face of Bella Rosa, as he had never looked on the face of woman before, with gaze so fixed, as it seemed, that her words fell unheeded on his ear; but it was not so; low as those words were, they entered his very soul, and wakened feelings there of whose existence he had never yet dreamed. He sprang eagerly forward, he dared even to take the lady's hand, as he cried out in a voice hoarse with excitement, "Repeat those words, lady,—repeat them in pity; those words, softer and sweeter than the burden of an angel's hymn!"

Bella Rosa turned round in surprise; she was about to speak, but to what purpose none can tell, for at that very moment sounds of merriment burst in on the quiet cave—light footsteps were heard advancing—a group of masqued dancers drew nigh, and Bella Rosa, retreating, hastily exclaimed, "Go, go! your boat is at hand, our communing must cease."

Leo and Laura were the last, the only surviving descendants of a noble family, fallen into poverty and decay. Leo, at the age of sixteen, just when he was about to enter on his career of arms, by the death of his parents within a few months of each other, found himself left the only guardian, friend, and support of his baby sister, ten years younger than himself. What could he do? Should he follow up his glorious aspirings after fame, march on from victory to victory, and leave the little one uncared for, unprotected at home, to pine, perhaps to die in his absence? Should he leave the living image of his mother, his so-loved mother, to the care of ill-paid

mercenaries, to be tended carelessly, perhaps ill-treated, while he was revelling in hall and toiling in camp? He could not bear the thought; so throwing up his commission, he bethought himself of a more peaceful occupation, and folding his little Laura to his heart, he turned his steps towards Lombardy: there, in an old ruined castle that yet remained to him of all his ancestors' fair possessions, to hide from all eyes his poverty, to sigh over his broken dreams of vanished glory, and to pursue in silence and solitude, the art to which he devoted himself; and he became, in time, contented,—almost happy. The glorious art to which he bent all the energies of his powerful mind fixed his imagination and elevated his soul. He felt, sometimes, that although he had exchanged sword for pencil, and field and foray for quiet hermitage, that even yet he should not go down unknown, unhonoured to the grave. He felt, sometimes, as he looked on the embodying of his mind's rich imaginings, that even yet he might produce something which should claim a tear from the bright eye of woman, and a tribute of applause from brave men.

One sunbeam yet remained to gild his fallen fortunes. The smiles and caresses of the child for whom he had sacrificed the glowing hopes of his early youth, were, at all times, sufficient to rouse him from his moodiest reverie. With some portion of that feeling which prompts wayward man to prize and love that object most, which occasions him the most trouble and solicitude, did Leo watch over the delicate health, and draw forth the tender ideas of his young sister; and well did she repay him! With

the forgetfulness of childhood, Laura soon ceased to talk of her lady mother and her city home; and with feelings far beyond her years, she learned to fix every emotion of hope and joy upon her brother. He became to her her world, her all. She would sit for hours, while yet a child, at his knee, absorbed in watching him, heedless of the toys which were collected in one corner of his study; and as she grew older, and her toys gave place to book, and work, and lute, still her treasures occupied the same beloved corner in her brother's apartment, and still were they neglected for the dearer pleasure of reading to him.

This same apartment, the only one that really deserved the name in the old ruined castle, was a picturesque enough place, and fit to be the haunt of an artist. Its lofty size and carved pillars showed that, though now in ruins, it had been the resort of the nobles of the land; and though some panes of the high painted windows had fallen, and some flutings of the Doric columns that upheld the roof were broken, and the walls were, in many parts, stained and defaced by time; yet did these defects rather add to, than diminish from the pleasing aspect of the whole. For, the ivy and the vine had thrown their beauty, like a veil, over the old building, and their young tendrils, forcing a way through the broken panes, had wreathed them over with a frame of nature's own sweet broidery; and when the sun darted his rays aslant through the tender green leaves and purple fruitage, lighting them up with rich light, it was a fair sight to look upon, fairer than any silken tapestry would have been. Nor was the interior less

daintily adorned. The graceful bells of the fuchsia, the splendid blossoms of the salvia, mingled with the fragrant jessamine that leaned for support around the defaced columns ; and as to the walls, they were glowing and breathing with every form of beauty and gentleness, that ever figured in the dreams of poetry, or gave life to the historian's page.

A pleasant retreat, in sooth, was that ancient room in the burning afternoons of summer ; a pleasant retreat to the brother and sister who inhabited it. He, bending over his canvass, indulging in dim aspirations of glory in the days to come, which should shed radiance over his name, or dwelling with rapt spirit in the long by-past, among chivalrous warriors and fair women, who walked the world ere luxury had changed it from a fair garden blooming with the flowers of paradise, truth, bravery, constancy, and love, to a dreary and waste howling wilderness. He, lingering delightedly among these dreams of fancy, —what recked he of the poverty and desolation of the present moment ? And Laura, as she sat reclining at her brother's feet, her dark eye glowing, her pale cheek flushing, as she read aloud from the inspired pages which gave them this new world to revel in,—as, with quick intellect, she caught the flashes of enthusiasm that gleamed from her brother's spirit, and threw them back with added radiance from her own,—oh ! what recked she that their wealth was spent, their name forgotten, and themselves the only denizens of their silent halls !

“Brother,” she said, one evening, as, entering unexpectedly, she saw him hastily throw a covering over

his easel, and turn with pretended eagerness to his portfolio, "this must not be; you must not have, for the first time, a secret from your own Laura. Nay, nay, but I must see this carefully hidden work, be it what it may."—She raised the covering: "It is but a Madonna. And didst thou think, dear Leo, that I should sigh to see in thy Madonnas, instead of my own dark braids and pale features, the golden curls and bright bloom of one who is far more beautiful?—Ah! Leo, I see it all now.—Not in vain have we bent together over the pages of Dante, of Tasso, and of Petrarch; she is thy Beatrice, thy Leonora, thy Laura.—No, no;" changing her tone with a passionate gush of tears,—“not thy Laura! Think not, my brother, that this proud beauty will ever love thee as thy poor sister does.”

“I know it, well I know it;” answered Leo, with a troubled aspect. “I might as well hope to win to my embrace one of those brilliant stars on which I look so often and so fondly; nevertheless, I may gaze and worship. Since the first moment I saw her, her beauty has haunted me like a dream; it may be I shall never more behold her; yet not the less will she be the queen of my destiny. But, my sister, think not, for all this, that thou wilt be less dear to me than in the days of old. Come, love; the breeze is rising. To-night I will not go forth alone. Come, Laura, there is a boat waiting by the lake side; we will go enjoy the fair moonlight together this evening.”

And they went *together*, and very soon were skimming over the bright waters, and enjoying the sweet influences of an Italian evening sky. Laura, in the calmness and beauty of the hour, forgot to reproach

any more her brother, for keeping hidden from her the secret thought of his heart; and Leo, as with every turn of the boat he changed his position, so that he might still see the lake palace, which was to him as Kiblaah to the Mussulman, forgot his life of labour and self-denial, his pride, his poverty; while he retraced every word, every look, every moment of that one evening, wherein he had first mounted the marble steps of the castle before him. Ah! dear is the memory, while life endures, of our first interview with the loved one.—Our love may be prosperous; we may enjoy, in after times, hours of uninterrupted communing; we may revel with heart at rest and hope fulfilled; our chosen by our side, in starlit bower and in tapestried hall; yet still, at times, will memory wander over the past, and dwell delightedly on the hour of first meeting. We may have to contend with an evil destiny; sorrow and disappointment may attend us like evil spirits, and sow every step of our weary life-path with thorns; hope deferred may make the soul sicken, and hope disappointed may break the heart;—yet, looking back through days of toil and nights of sleepless sorrow, one happy memory will gleam in the distance like a white-winged bird—seen afar off through the tempest, and we shall forget all for a short time, while re-picturing the first hour of meeting the one whose love has coloured our own life.

Presently they drew near, yet nearer, to the garden walls behind the palace: they stopped close by one of the grottoes which extend to the water's edge, and Leo, assisting his sister to land, entered with the air of one who treads accustomed ground. It was now

midsummer, and the palms and trembling mimosas which occupy these grottoes during winter, had been removed, and the recess in which they stood bore marks of having been recently inhabited. A lute, and a rich satin cloak were carelessly thrown on a couch that occupied one side of the retreat; a small ebony table in the centre was covered with books and flowers; and from the roof of rough grey-stone was suspended a perfumed lamp.

Leo took up the lute and touched a few low chords; but a few, for light footfalls were heard advancing;—so light was the tread, that only Leo heard them. In an instant the hot colour mounted to his cheek and brow, as with a step, hurried, yet trembling like that of a timid girl, he hastened to the mouth of the cave to welcome the intruder.—There was a moment's deep silence; presently it was fearfully broken: Laura heard the low cry of surprise—the clamour of deadly strife; and rushing out, beheld her brother contending at fearful odds with half-a-dozen armed men. Resistance was utterly vain; and Leo, presently overpowered, was borne insensible to a boat close at hand. Favoured by the dim light, Laura, clinging to her brother's mantle, sprung in with them; and it was not till the sail was set, and the boat fairly on her way, that the ruffians perceived this unwelcome addition to their party.

Presently a change came over the sky; a storm arose with the rapidity incidental to the southern climates; the thunder roared, and the lightning flashed, and then, as though the windows of the sky were suddenly opened, the rain fell in sheeted torrents. But Laura was alike insensible to all,—crouched down

at the bottom of the boat, holding fast one corner of her brother's mantle with one hand, and feeling from time to time with the other whether his heart still beat: but one idea was present to her mind,—that of her brother, her Leo, whom she loved with the clinging love of an orphan, dying in the prime of youth, with all his lofty dreams of future glory clustering around his heart, by the hand of an ignoble ruffian, in a midnight fray!—No thought of self, of the life of poverty and desolation that awaited her, mingled with her grief; pale and immoveable, she spoke not, till the momentary shock of touching the shore as they drew to land, extorted a low murmur from Leo, as it awoke him to something like consciousness. Then the young girl arose, and, kneeling lowly before him who appeared to be the chief of the party, with tears and words of passionate pleading, she besought him to stay their journeying yet awhile, and permit her to examine the wounds of her brother, and tend them with what skill she might.

As well might she have addressed the stormy elements which had so lately threatened them all with death. Leo was carried ashore, but although a few fishermen's cottages that stood on the beach, appeared to offer shelter and assistance, he was not allowed to enter any one of them. A litter was roughly and quickly formed with materials already in the boat; the cavalier, still insensible, was placed on it; four of the brigands, if such indeed they were, placed under it their broad shoulders, and very soon winding round behind the fishermen's village, they entered a wild desolate tract of country overgrown with underwood, and shaded by lofty trees. The nar-

row path wound up the side of a mountain; it was steep and full of large rough stones; the rain still beat down heavily, yet Laura, holding fast by her brother's mantle, ascended with them. This timid and delicate girl, whose face the winds of heaven had not been suffered to visit too roughly, now alone with rude and lawless men, dreamed not of fear. Strong in the sacred love that filled her young and affectionate heart, she moved on by the side of him she loved, spurning every obstacle in her path, and heedless alike of the raging storm that threatened to shatter her frail form, and of the fatigue that pressed upon her almost to exhaustion. At last they stopped; daylight was just dawning and displayed to the weary eyes of the travellers a rude hut, partly formed of rough masonry, partly of boughs of trees, with the leaves yet unwithered, still clinging to them. It seemed as though they were expected, for wine and provisions were ready prepared for them. Before partaking of this refreshment,—before even sitting down to rest after his toilsome march, the chief of the band turned to Laura, and told her that they had reached the end of the first stage of their journey, and that it was not possible to allow her farther to accompany them. Again she would have entreated, but with a look and accent of stern determination, which shewed at once that all entreaty would be vain, he said, “We remain here for three hours to rest and recruit our strength; if it be your pleasure, maiden, to dress your brother's wounds and wail over him for that time, do so: when we resume our march, you must return by the way you came.”

Laura replied not, but gently and skilfully as

though her own heart had not been full almost to suffocation, set about her task of love. Leo's wounds, though deep and many, for he had fought like a bayed lion, were not mortal; tenderly his sister dressed them, and then with kisses and words of loving kindness awoke him to consciousness.

"Must he die! must he die!" she said in the accents of despair, "alone and unaided in the haunts of rude wild men, in the robber's mountain home? Shall there be no woman's hand there to uphold his fainting head and to press his fevered hand, and no woman's voice to whisper of hope and faith for the future? Oh! let me go with him! I cannot harm you; or let him return with me; why seek ye his life? If it is ransom ye want, I will give you all I possess in the world."

Of all the words which Laura poured forth in the fulness of her grief, one only caught the brigand's ear. "Ransom!" he said, "why, Diego," turning to one of his comrades, "why should we not have the ransom the girl speaks of? We must keep the young signor three months for *his* pleasure, why not keep him three more for our own?" Some words of remonstrance were uttered by Diego, but they fell unheeded; for the captain, turning again to Laura, concluded with "Hark ye! young maiden, we brave fellows, who live by other men's labour, have no objection to a good bag of silver dollars. If, on the first day of the ensuing year, thou wilt meet us here with ten thousand Colonnati in thy hand, thy brother shall return to thee; till then, I promise thee his life shall be safe. If thou comest not, I will not answer for it." Now, my men, march and away; thou, Celio, re-

main awhile here, and restrain the maiden from following us."

"I will," answered Celio.—"As well," continued the man in an under tone, "might he say to the poor girl, 'Thou shalt ransom thy brother with the throned moon, climb up,—catch it, and bring it hither.'"

There was something in Laura's grief so quiet, so subdued, yet so deep, that it awed even her rough guard, and far from attempting to annoy or insult her, he withdrew from the hut, and left her alone with her sorrow. Some hours she remained uninterrupted, for when he at last reopened the rude door, the sun had long passed its meridian.

"Signorina," said the man in a tone that might almost be called gentle, "the sun is sinking behind the hills: if you are sufficiently rested, we had better commence our journey, or you will scarcely reach the water-side before nightfall."

So Laura arose, and the bandit quietly and kindly led her forth and assisted her to overcome the difficulties of the rough descent. It was evening when they reached the fishermen's little village; but Celio prevailed on one of them to reconduct the young girl across the lake. Laura could not help thanking her self-elected guide, when they parted, for his escort, and for the kindly manner in which he had performed it.

"Nay, nay, maiden!" he answered, "speak not of it. I had a sister of my own once; young and innocent as you are, and for the sake of that lost one I have helped and guarded you; and Signorina, if you do indeed make up the ransom for your brother and bring it hither on the appointed day, I will be

here to lead you to my comrades' haunt. Now farewell, maiden ; may the saints protect you !"

Long, long after Laura returned to her lonely and silent home, she remained in a sort of stupor, brought on as much by grief as by fatigue, insensible to every thing that was passing around. Her flowers faded, she saw it not ; her tame doves, no longer caressed and petted, flew away to their companions in the woods ; her books were unopened, and her guitar untouched. Pale and motionless she would lie extended on a couch from sunrise to sunset, and it was with difficulty that old Ursula, the one attendant,—who having nursed her brother and herself in infancy, had followed them into exile and poverty,—could prevail upon her to take the food necessary to preserve life. The one thought that haunted poor Laura by day, and deprived her of sleep by night, was the difficulty—nay, the impossibility, poor and friendless as she was, of procuring so large a sum as was requisite to restore her brother to liberty ; perhaps to save his very life. Ursula tried every means her untutored affection could suggest to rouse her young mistress from her melancholy reverie. At last she succeeded. One happy hour she raised the veil thrown over Leo's easel, and deplored deeply that so beautiful a work should be left unfinished. " Could not you, Signorina, finish it ?" she asked ; " and who knows but that the count might give you something for it,—a large sum perhaps ?"

This idea was enough for Laura : it roused her at once from her state of inaction ; it supplied her with a motive for exertion. She remembered having heard it said that the Conté Montalva, foreseeing that a

time would come when he must inevitably part with his child, had offered a high reward to any artist who should execute for him an accurate portrait of her. Many had tried, but none had yet succeeded, none had been able to catch and fix the varying beauties of her heavenly countenance. The Conté too, with a jealousy pardonable in the south, had been unwilling at any time to allow her to sit more than once to the same artist ; so the task yet remained unperformed, and to this task Laura resolved to devote every energy of mind and body. Difficulty did not appal her ; for what is too difficult for the energy of strong affection ? She was no mean proficient in the imitative art, having, from very infancy, taken too deep an interest in all her brother's pursuits, to neglect this predominant one : so she arose and dried her tearful eyes, and steadied her trembling hand, and applied with vigour and perseverance to her employment. Ursula was obliged now to change the tone of her entreaties, and urge her young mistress to take some repose, some recreation ; but she urged her in vain. She who had so loved to wander for hours in the green woods, marking every change in the aspect of nature — the sun setting behind the dark pines — the moonlight silvering the dim landscape — the mountains varying in tint with every cloud that passed over them ; she who had so loved to gather every bell and bud as they came forth in order, and knew by heart every note of every wild bird that haunted the thick forest, now sat contentedly from daybreak to nightfall, with pencil in hand, sketching and destroying, and sketching again, with a perseverance that would not be daunted, every feature

of the divine face, which no effort of the pencil had yet been able to pourtray.

Laura drew from memory, something aided by Leo's sketch, which although unfinished, yet, traced by the unerring hand of deep affection, gave indications of the same playfulness and spirit, tempered by maiden dignity, which animated the exquisite original. Three months Laura toiled, with patient activity yet undiminished, when she so far satisfied herself as to determine at trying to obtain one sitting. She made known her anxious wish, and was not refused.

Both the Conté and his daughter smiled, when, having been apprised that the artist waited admittance, the door opened, and a timid, trembling girl entered, bending almost beneath the weight of the canvass she carried, almost a child in years, and with a countenance pale and wasted, as though suffering at once under strong mental excitement, and extreme ill health. She, however, without casting a glance on the decorations of the noble room, scarcely even speaking to its habitants, set herself down at once gravely and quietly to her work, trembling more than ever at the difficulties before her, and at her small chance of success: for, in very deed, a fairer picture than the one now before her might scarcely meet the eye.

The Conté and his daughter were seated near the open window, to enjoy the cool autumnal breeze as it came fresh over the fair bosom of the lake, and fragrant with the sighs of the thousand flowers which formed the rich frame-work of the window. The old warrior sat rigidly upright in his high-backed Vene-

tian chair. At his side was a reading-table just large enough to support a huge folio volume, a record of the miracles of St. Carlo. The old man's hand rested on the book, but his eye wandered ever over the countenance of the fair young creature at his feet. Bella Rosa reclined upon a low ottoman, and her fingers wandered idly over the strings of a lute that rested against her knee. Her long fair hair fell about her like a veil, and she was unadorned excepting by a few orange blossoms, which the wind had blown in upon her satin robe, and which seemed to linger lovingly among its folds, as though they too would pay homage to her surpassing loveliness. When the shades of evening made her aware that she had indeed trespassed long on the patience of the fair young heiress, Laura arose, and with thanks to the young lady and her father, and a promise to come again at the expiration of three months, and show her finished work, she retired.

And now came the most difficult part of the poor maiden's task. She had received all the assistance she could hope for, henceforth she must depend upon herself alone. Every single touch produced its effect, and very often her intense anxiety defeating her purpose, would unnerve her hand, and deface in one instant the labour of days. Still, with unwearied assiduity, she began again, and her skill of hand improving by every failure, promised at last to equal the conception of her mind.

Never did painter, animated by the hope of present reward or by dreams of future fame, work so constantly and so untiringly as this young girl, who wrought only for her brother's liberty. Her patience

could not fail, for it was supplied from an exhaustless spring,—even from the deep affection of her warm and innocent heart.

Never, perhaps, were unwasting energy and incessant effort devoted in vain. The day, at last, arrived, on which Laura's fate hung, and the anticipation of which had supported her fragile frame through fatigue and exertion, almost surpassing her strength to bear.

Again she entered the presence of Conté Montalva and Rosa Bella, and again the Conté smiled at her entrance, but not now as in mockery of what a feeble girl might dare and do.

He was seated in the same attitude as when Laura had first beheld him, his hand resting on his open book, and our chronicler has even mischievously recorded that the book was open at the self-same place. The flowers around the casement had given place to rich damask curtains, a bright fire glowed through the cross-bars of a huge brazier; in all other respects the room and its inhabitants seemed to have undergone no change. Laura stood against the wall opposite the Conté; she leaned back for support; she could not speak; almost the beatings of her heart were audible; every pulse seemed to beat with tenfold rapidity, as with one desperate effort she at last unrolled her canvass, and held it up for inspection.

The iron features of the grim old warrior relaxed into a smile, as bright as was wont to illumine them when he looked on Bella Rosa herself. He advanced, he touched it, to make himself sure it was indeed a painted canvass. He beheld,—he placed it behind an empty frame that stood in the room, ready to be

filled by Tempesta's pencil ; he called his child, and made her stand beside it, and the look that animated his countenance, as his eye glanced from the portrait to the original, was one of perfect satisfaction.

"I must have it," he said, "I must have it, child ! what is the price of it ?"

"Ten thousand colonnati," answered Laura, gasping for breath, as, slowly and with painful effort, she pronounced the words.

"Ten thousand colonnati !" echoed the warrior. "You must be dreaming, child. Ten thousand colonnati ! A prince's ransom ! You must be mistaken ; you must be selling for another, and you have mistaken the artist's price."

"I painted that portrait myself," replied the girl, "and I am the mistress to dispose of it myself. The price is ten thousand colonnati ; it is a prince's ransom, but I want it for a purpose more important to me than a prince's ransom."

"Nay, nay, maiden," answered Montalva ; "but you rate your work too highly :—half that sum must content ye ; for half that sum, the most skilful painter in Rome would come hither, and labour at my bidding."

"It may be so ;" said Laura, quietly. "I do not dispute your Excellency's word ; neither came I hither for the purpose of disputing with your Excellency's avarice. You behold my work ; I have named my price ; I have nothing further to say." And Laura folded her arms, and stood awaiting the Conté's decision ; her pale cheek nowise flushed ; for it seemed that every emotion, which had been wont in bye-gone days to colour her cheek and brow, was

hushed now and laid at rest, by the one all-conquering feeling of intense anxiety, which for a long time had robbed her days and nights of rest.

So she stood, her lips firmly compressed, as though resolved that no other word should issue from them; and calm and quiet as though her whole happiness had not depended on the issue of the conflict in the Conté's mind.

All this time the young Bella Rosa had stood by, listening with deep interest to the conference; and now, with a glance of pity at the artist, and some slight feeling of annoyance curling her red lip, she walked loftily away, and opening the window, called to some tame birds that were feeding on the terrace below, and inquired of an attendant, who was watching them, whether her pet lory had yet been found.

"Too much, far too much," said the old man, musingly; "and now that I look at it in this strong light, with the sun-shine full upon it, it is surely less like my daughter than at a first glance it seemed to me: the hair is less brilliant, and the flowers—were never *such* flowers blossoming in my balcony!"

Laura vouchsafed no answer. At that moment the door opened, and a page entered, bearing on his finger the stray bird, for which the lady had been inquiring. The lory, startled and flurried, hovered for some time about the room, then darting downwards upon the picture, pecked gently and lovingly against the smiling lips, as he had been wont to do to those of his mistress.

"What thinks your excellency, now?" asked

Laura. "Here is a most disinterested judge come to decide the question between us."

"Well, well;" answered the old man, testily, "like or not, you must take for it this bag, containing five thousand coins, and go your ways, maiden.—By-and-bye, some three months hence, I will try to make up the rest of the sum."

Laura took not the proffered purse, but quietly withdrew the portrait from its frame, and rolling up the canvass, she approached the brazier and held it towards the flames. Her countenance changed not from its air of stern determination, and her large glorious eye dilated with scorn, as she said—

"There is no future for me. To-day you pay the price, Conté; or to-day I reduce this portrait to ashes before your eyes!"

Then Bella Rosa sprang forward, and laying her hand on the maiden's wrist, she turned, quivering with emotion, to her father, and said—"This dispute for a little dirty silver is unworthy of us, oh, my father! The sons and daughters of our race have ever been famous for their liberal patronage of talent. Here, girl, take the money, and take this chain of emeralds; it is worth more than all you ask, and speak to none of what has passed this day." She unclasped her chain as she spoke, and threw it over Laura's neck, while at the same time she placed the colonnati in her hands.

One radiant smile lit up the young artist's face; her dark eye shone through tears, as for a single instant she bent down and kissed the hem of Bella Rosa's robe. The next instant she was out of sight.

Down, with the speed of lightning,—down she has-

tened to the water-side — quickly the slight skiff bounded over the waters, as though it, too, were instinct with life; and almost before the bright flush of joy had faded from her brow, she stood in the fisherman's hut, by the side of Celio. "I am ready," were the only words she uttered, as taking his hand and leading him forth, she intimated her desire of proceeding instantly. And a weary journey was before them; — the large loose stones, in the scrambling path that led over the mountain, hurt the poor maiden's foot; the prickly underwood that overhung it impeded her progress every instant, tearing her dress, and wounding her delicate hands until the blood flowed forth; yet still she paused not, — through thorns and thick briars she pursued her painful path, overcoming every obstacle as though she saw it not. She would not even rest at the midway hut, wherein they had left her before, but on — on, insensible to fatigue, and careless of danger, she went: — twilight had fallen, when at last her guide stopped, and raised a large turf-heap from the ground, in the midst of a thick wood. Fearlessly she followed him down the subterranean passage, — and fearlessly she stood among the dark, fierce robbers; her quick eye in a moment distinguished the chief, and, quite exhausted, she sunk at his feet, her long journey over, and tendered to him, without speaking, the money and the jewels.

"It is well," he said, narrowly examining them, "very well, by my faith: this has been a lucky adventure; we were well paid by the old gentleman for carrying off the young one; and now are we well paid for letting him go forth. Ho, there! Bring here the cavalier!"

And Leo entered ; he caught up his fainting sister ; he bent despairingly over her ; he entreated her by every name of endearment his affection could suggest, to revive and to look upon him. One cup of wine he took from the hands of the brigand chief, and forced her to swallow, and then raising her tenderly in his arms, carried her forth from the bandit's home.

"Nay, nay," called out the robber chief; "we part not thus, young sir. We, who have been comrades so long ;—but he hears me not. Celio ! quick, saddle a swift horse and after them ; that young maiden cannot walk many steps, and her rich chain is well worth the best steed in my stable."

Not even when supported by her brother's tender arm upon the good horse ; not even when reclining in the cushioned boat, with her brother at her side ; not even when walking slowly and languidly up the narrow myrtle-fringed path, that led from the lake side to their dwelling, could Laura find words to express her delight, or to question her brother touching his abode among the robbers. It seemed as though the task to which she had so long devoted every effort, once achieved, she had no longer a purpose in life. It seemed as though the overwrought machine now languished only for repose,—for repose that might no more be interrupted.

Leo tried, but in vain, to raise some sign of emotion on her colourless face ; he spoke of his despair in the early days of his imprisonment ; of his fears for her desolate and unprotected state ; of his suspicion that Montalva himself had instigated his abduction. He told her how he had, at last, tamed down his free spirit and roving step to a prison dwelling, and had sought amusement even by depicting the picturesque

accompaniments of his rude life ;— he told her how they had at last, relying on his honour, trusted him in short absences from the cave ; until, seeing that he was incapable of breaking his faith, they had suffered him to spend whole days in the dark wood, enjoying every change of the hour and of the day ;—and he painted to her the conflict of his soul when, during his long rambles, he sometimes reached the summit of a hill, and could look down, dimly seeing in the distance the faint outline of Bella Rosa's castle, and of the woods which encircled his own more humble dwelling ; and he pined in his very heart of hearts to traverse the distance that lay between him and the home of his hope, and of his love ; yet dared not, because his promise, stronger than bonds of iron, was about him, and impelled him to return. But still no smile illumined Laura's face ; no token betrayed that she took interest in these details ; she did not utter one word until her brother gently laid her down on a couch in the room where they had spent together so many happy hours. " Near the window," she said, " oh, my brother ! let me be near the window, and look on the setting sun once again."

" Once again !" exclaimed Leo ; " say not once again, Laura ; you are not dying,—you must not leave me in the very moment of re-union ; you must not leave me in this dreary world, alone !" So Laura re-opened her closed eyes, and she spoke, although the damps of death were already settling on her brow.

" Leo," she said, " do not repine : I die ! but, oh my brother ! I am so happy in death ! My life has been spent with you—devoted to you ;—I die, oh, so happily ! for my life has paid my Brother's Ransom."

BARBARA.

It was a lovely day, fit for a happy deed, which saw the young and wealthy heiress of Locarno,—Barbara Limona, united to the husband of her choice. Barbara was an orphan, and one of those who live only in the love of those around them. Her broad lands and her sweet face won for her many suitors, some of high rank, some of great wealth; but she thought she acted wisely and well in preferring to them all, the brave and high spirited young Montalto. Once secure of his affection, she gave herself up to him unreservedly, keeping back no part of her princely inheritance, save only sufficient for a dowry for her favourite cousin Fiore, a portionless girl who had dwelt with her from infancy. There was not a single shade of suspicion or reserve in the generous nature of Barbara; and now she stood before the altar in the chapel of an old island castle on the Lago Maggiore, which formed a part of her paternal inheritance,—her hand locked in that of the bridegroom, and her fond eyes turned confidingly to him, the very personification of youthful happiness. And she was happy,—she stood in her own ancestral hall, henceforth never again to feel that desolation of heart, which had so often oppressed her, even to tears, when she had seen looks of kindred love bent on her less wealthy companions, for which she herself would have given priceless treasure. The holy words which bound her for life to him she loved, were spoken too by one whom

she venerated almost as a father,—by the good John Beccaria, who had led her from childhood upwards, in the paths of truth ; and he who stood by her side, won by her own sweet earnestness and by the sterner reasoning of Beccaria, had renounced the errors of popery, and thenceforth was to pray, not only for her, but with her. In truth, it was a joyous scene. The castle, which had been built during the stormy times when the Guelphs and Ghibellines desolated Italy, still retained much of its martial appearance ; the walls of the chapel, which, for various prudential reasons had been fitted up in the lower part of the mansion, were even yet hung with shield and hauberk and fair pennon, all of which, as a single ray of bright sunshine came streaming in through the high grated window, singularly contrasted with the fair group which animated the picture.

When the ceremony was over, every one turned with smiles and blessings to the bride ; save only two. Poor Fiore, who knew she would now occupy but a slight portion of her cousin's love and of her thoughts, could neither speak nor smile, for her tears fell fast and bitterly ; and among the cavaliers who, with proud bearing and pleased eye, came forward, according to the custom of the times, to claim the privilege of kissing the bride's forehead, there was one whose flushed cheek turned pale with suppressed rage, as he bent forward and whispered in words audible to her only, "Revenge !" Poor Barbara ! this was the storm-cloud over her day of happiness ;—for days, nay, for weeks afterwards, the visioned form of a dagger, or of a bowl, seemed to spring up ever between her and her heart's idol ; and the flowers

so thickly strewed in her life's pathway had for her neither beauty nor perfume, for a dark fear of some unknown evil hung over her; but at last it faded gradually away, for the days passed on and witnessed only increasing love and confidence between the newly married pair; and when Luigi Torrido, unable longer to endure the mortification of beholding his rival's happiness, declared his resolution of travelling for a few years, and when at last he was really gone, the young heart of Barbara abandoned itself to undisturbed enjoyment, and each moment was counted but by the perfect content it brought. Alas! the bowl and the dagger would have been harmless weapons compared to those with which the undying hatred of Luigi was preparing to destroy her peace.

He went away into far-off lands. He had a young, a very young and beautiful sister, at a convent in France. He withdrew Olimpia from thence; he brought her to his own home; he engaged the first masters in every branch of elegant accomplishment belonging to that day, and spared neither pains nor expense to render her as fascinating as she was beautiful. Olimpia, without understanding, fully answered his designs. Nature had endowed her with wit and beauty, and education did not provide her with the principles or with the delicacy which restrain woman from exerting all the power with which wit and beauty arm her. When Olimpia had completed her seventeenth year, Luigi and his sister left Paris, for he said he should be proud to witness the success that would await her in their native land.

Among the earliest visitors to welcome the brother and sister, were the Montalti; but Barbara never

repeated the visit. She was modest and retiring ; and for her the light, volatile manners of Olimpia had no charm. On others, however, she burst as a splendid vision ; never had any thing at all like her illumined the quiet city before ; and the simple inhabitants were too much dazzled to inquire whether the gem was worthy of the casket.

The elegance and luxury which reigned throughout the establishment of Luigi, were not more opposed to the simplicity for which every other house in Locarno was remarkable, than was the easy brilliance of Olimpia's manners and conversation, to the modest reserve of the good citizens' wives, whose thoughts strayed not beyond the limits of their household affairs, and whose world was comprised in home. Montalto, however, had travelled, and he delighted to renew his dim reminiscences of splendour and elegance at Luigi's evening soirées. He admired wit — he liked novelty ; and then the young beauty was haughty and capricious. It was something to win a smile from her who so seldom smiled ; to be her partner in the dance, and her escort in the promenade, who affected to look down on all the plain citizens of the place with utter contempt. So, day by day, Montalto wearied more and more of accompanying his gentle wife in her sail over the quiet lake, or in her twilight walk, and went with increasing pleasure to swell the number of the giddy crowd, assembled in Luigi's saloon. Luigi was well satisfied ; he knew his heartless sister too well to apprehend any evil consequences to herself ; he had driven away the dove of peace from the home of her whom he had never forgiven ; he had implanted the arrow

in the heart of his victim ; and he hoped that her death would be more lingering, and as sure, as if he had offered the poison-chalice to her lip, or the dagger to her heart. Luigi was well pleased ; for day by day, the pale cheek, and faded form, and troubled countenance, gave token of the agony within.

* * * *

It happened one morning, that three ladies sat together at their work, in a pleasant room that overlooked the Lago Maggiore. As their busy fingers moved, they beguiled the time with conversation ; and their talk, first of all, fell upon public affairs.

“Have you heard,” said the Lady Rosalvina to her young hostess, “aught of our commissioners since their departure to Lucerne ?”

“I have not,” replied Barbara. “I have not,” she continued with a sigh, “seen my husband since yesterday at noon.”

“For what purpose,” inquired Fiore, “have they been sent into Switzerland ?”

“Nay,” answered Rosalvina, “you have, indeed, been engrossed, Fiore, by your bridal festivities, if you have not heard, or, at least, if you have failed to remember the forgery of the wicked Walther, who pretended to discover a deed, purporting that our town’s people had sworn to adhere to the Roman Catholic faith, until the meeting of the council. We have sent some trustworthy members of our little church to repel the vile falsehood, which would brand the Locarnese as cowards and traitors,—to prove that

Walther himself framed the deed, traitor as he has proved to the best interests of his country."

Here the good lady stopped from sheer want of breath, and there was a long silence, broken only by the noise of the shuttles on which Fiore was winding her silks of many colours.

Fiore, the youngest of the party, was the first to speak again. She had been but very lately married, and she talked, as young wives are wont to talk, of her Guido's tender love; of her happy home; of her trelliced garden; and of the cheerful hilarity which reigned throughout her little ménage. Rosalvina, who had been many years a matron, mingled with her congratulations some household advice, and a few sage remarks on the proneness of man to idolize, and then to forget. She gave the laughing Fiore a specially curious recipe for making macaroni; and then begged her never, on any account, to allow her husband to go to any place of public amusement, or even to church, without herself. So deeply were the two, as they bent over their embroidery frames, engaged in this profitable conversation, that it was not until the old cobbler in the Genevese clock that stood upon the table, gave eleven distinct taps on his last, thus warning the Lady Rosalvina of the approaching dinner hour, that, rising to depart, she perceived the absence of the mistress of the house.

"You will make my excuses to our dear Barbara," she said, as she folded her capacious mantle about her; "and tell her that my boys will have returned from school by the time I reach home: they will be clamorous for their dinner, and if I am not there to

preside, Santa Maria protect the galline and the marmalade!"

"Am I to tell my cousin," asked the young Fiore, glancing, as she spoke, to a portrait of the venerable Fontana, which hung over the mantel-piece, "that you invoked the protection of the Virgin for . . .?"

"Nay, nay;" interrupted the good matron, slightly colouring; "speak not of it. Our young lady of the castle has become, of late years, almost as grave and as particular as Beccaria himself. Scarcely will she permit one to invoke even a saint in her presence, much less the Santissima. But farewell, Fiore; I must be gone;—and remember what I told you about purchasing your stock of *baccalà* before the carnival is over."

No sooner had the dame departed than Fiore threw down the silk she was winding, and ran out into the veranda to seek her cousin. Barbara was seated at the far-off end, under the trellice-work, then glowing and beautiful, with its rich clusters of ripe purple grapes. She leaned her head upon her hand, and looked down upon a lovely scene; for the fair lake was beaming and sparkling under the noontide sun, bounded afar off by a long low line of hills, under the shadow of which a single white sail gleamed. Yet neither upon bright lake, nor on summer sky, nor on the luxuriance around her, were the soft eyes of Barbara fixed.—When Fiore came close up to her, she saw that they were full of tears, and that the lady's countenance was sadder even than it was wont to be.

"Nay," she said, at last, in answer to the anxious

solicitude of her cousin, "believe me, dear love, I weep not for any new sorrow; I blush that you should have seen these childish tears;—I have been only thinking, my Fiore, that if, perchance, any unexpected trial should occur—such an one as those by which God was pleased, in old days, to try the faith of his worshippers, that it would be easier, far easier, for me to lay down my life in defence of the truth, than it would be for you, my Fiore."

"What," interrupted the other, "have you heard?"

"I have heard nothing new," was the answer;—"nothing. I was but following my own sad train of thought."

"And I know," said Fiore, "what gave rise to that train of thought;—would I had been dumb, ere I had spoken those words. Barbara, it was my own silly prattle that drove you from the saloon: I was talking of Guido, and of my happiness, without reflecting that, bright as now seems the vista of life, it is far less bright than yours appeared five years ago: and now, how changed!—and you all the time were drawing comparisons. Dear Barbara, can you forgive my thoughtlessness?"

And Fiore's eyes, now, were as tearful as her cousin's, as she raised them to solicit forgiveness; but not long did they remain so:—even while Barbara's kiss was yet moist upon her fair brow, a cry of delight escaped. A boat was gliding rapidly over the short space that separated the castle from the shore; a young cavalier himself held the oar to speed his progress; and Fiore said hurriedly, while her face crimsoned with pleasure,—

"He has returned sooner than he expected from Turin; and he cannot enjoy his fair home, unless I be there to enjoy it with him."

Another moment, and the boat had moored; a quick step bounded up the marble stairs; a hurried greeting was exchanged;—one lingering, regretful glance the young bride gave to the veranda, ere she departed; and then Barbara, more desolate than ever, watched them, as she leaned upon the balustrade, glide together in their light pinnace back towards Locarno. She watched them, and almost fancied she could hear their quick, succeeding exclamations of delight; she fancied them wandering together with renewed pleasure through the shaded walks of their blooming garden,—Fiore recounting all that had passed during their short separation, and asking in return a thousand questions, touching all that had befallen him in his journey from Turin. She imaged all this till her very soul sickened, as she knew and felt that such happiness could never more be for her.

"I will not think of them," she said, at last; "there is no envy in my heart for dear Fiore's happier doom; but it does only enhance the misery of the bereaved, to look on the semblance of what they have lost; and I will gaze no longer on this bright sky and blue lake, that seem to mock my grief;—I will go for consolation where never, yet, I went in vain."

A packet of letters was upon the table in the saloon, addressed to her husband;—she took the packet into his dressing-room, for it was in the way to her own little oratory; but, as she was passing through the door on her way out again, her foot struck against something hard, and when she stooped

to pick it up, she saw that it was a miniature case—the same which she had given to Montalto, five years since, on their wedding-day.

“He prized it, then!” she said; “oh, how much he prized it, then!—and now it is trodden under foot, while he wears next his heart, as a charm, the likeness of Olimpia!—perhaps, in his hour of evening retirement, he places them side by side, to see which is the fairest:—that, at least, shall never be again.”—So she took away with her the despised gift, and when she was in her own room she opened the case, and walked up to the mirror with it in her hand.—“Aye,” she continued, sadly, “there *is* change; the cheek is pale, and the eye is dim; faded, indeed, beside that bright image of what has been. Almost I could forgive him his fickle heart, were it not that his was the hand which stole light and bloom away. But how childish is this; as though beauty possessed a charm, when novelty has fled.—Is this the consolation I talked of seeking?—All things seem leagued against my peace to-day.” And then that mournful lady sat down to her little table, and she unfastened the silver clasps of a huge volume that was upon it.

For some time, the gay vision of Fiore and Guido, so bright in the first flush of their youthful happiness, would flit before her mind’s eye; but she, who had attained some mastery over wayward thoughts, resolutely put away the remembrance, and bent her eyes over the pages she turned. Gradually, very gradually, but very completely, did the expression of anguish pass away from her fair face. Her brow grew lighter; her lips were no longer compressed,

they relaxed into a smile; hope and faith were at work within; an air of perfect peace stole sweetly over her countenance; and when she at last arose, it might be seen, that although she had been in the dark valley of tribulation, her God had been there with her to support and to comfort.

Barbara busied herself all that day with more than her usual diligence, in her accustomed employments, for she practised the precepts she loved to read. She visited her little school of orphans in the village; she distributed corn and wine among the destitute; and her errands of mercy over, she returned to decorate her saloon with fresh flowers, to place fresh-gathered fruits upon the table, that all things might wear a smiling aspect when her husband should return to his home. She delayed the time of evening prayer,—still he came not; she assembled her household, for the peaceful duty of closing night, prayed with them and for them herself, and then dismissed them to rest. She felt that her day had not been idly wasted; and, to repel some intruding regret that would arise, while awaiting her husband's late return, she betook herself again to reading. This time she took up the manuscript journal and letters of Fontana, the good Carmelite who had been the first to introduce the reformed opinions into Locarno; she read that he laboured for twenty years ere any fruit of his labour appeared. Her eye fell upon these words, in one of his letters to Zuingle: "There are, as yet, but three of us, but Midian was not vanquished by numbers; it is our duty to sow and plant, the Lord will give the increase in his own good time." Barbara looked up at the venerable

and placid countenance of the portrait before her, and she thought, "At least his labours were blessed to himself; blessed to himself on earth, and doubtless in eternity. Yes, it is our duty to strive to the uttermost, and leave the rest to One who is wiser than we are."

When Montalto at last came in, he held in his hand the letters which had arrived for him that day. His countenance was troubled, and he stood for some time opposite his wife, as though doubting whether he should communicate their contents or not. How gladly would she, at that moment, have laid her hand upon his arm with submissive tenderness, and have besought him to reveal only that which grieved him, that she might offer consolation; but no look or word of kindness invited her approach; he merely said at last, in a tone of cold constraint: "Barbara, you may soon look for rougher work than weaving embroidery, and training flowers. The Diets have been held, to discuss the confession of our faith that we sent to Turin. It is settled that the Locarnese shall either return to the faith of their ancestors, or shall be exiled from fair Italy. This sentence has been intimated to the prefect, and the arrival of deputies to carry it into effect is daily expected. Do not look at me so anxiously," he continued; "heed not my determination; it is sufficient for you, signora, that I leave you to act according to your own," and so saying, without one farther word of advice or of consolation, Montalto walked away, leaving his wife to the companionship of her own thoughts: other companionship needed she not, for deep, and bitter, and busy were they. Should she, to whom

so many looked up for guidance, or whom so many would be glad to quote as a precedent,— should she be the first to waver? On the other hand, was it likely that Montalto would give up the high consideration he enjoyed, station, and wealth, and luxury to follow her into exile, alas, she knew not whither! And yet he had a noble spirit; would he like to hear it said that he had abandoned the cause he had adopted in sunshine, at the very first appearance of the storm? And even if this consideration should prevail, there was another,— Olimpia, the fair, the haughty, the fascinating Olimpia, with whom he so loved to spend every hour he could snatch from graver employment. Barbara trembled as she bethought herself how often Olimpia had tried her influence, and had never tried it in vain. She endeavoured to persuade herself that it was her duty to choose, at least, the part he should choose. Was not her own happiness of more import to her than the welfare of the multitude? If she should abandon Montalto, who then would whisper to him of repentance and peace? What, to her, was the fate of the many, and why should not every one act according to the dictates of his own conscience? When she came to this point, her reason smote her; it was so easy to apply it to others — so difficult to apply it to herself. She looked up and, fancifully perhaps, deemed that the countenance of Balthazar Fontana wore a stern look, as though detecting the fallacy of her reasoning. Then came to mind many words she had read that day. “Thou shalt not do evil that good may come,” stood in terrible array before her, and she almost determined, ere she sought her pillow,

to walk in the narrow way, though even she should tread it alone; to bide the pelting of the storm, although no shelter should be at hand. She *almost* determined, but with the morning came remembered dreams of her husband's tender love, in their early wedded days, for the renewal of which she felt that she could sacrifice more than life. She was yet kneeling in her quiet oratory, striving to still the tumult within, her face dimmed with tears and pale with thought, when John Beccaria came with the early dawn to visit her. To him she made known her hopes and fears, and even her half-formed and often-shaken resolves.

"Barbara Montalto," said the old man, after some minutes' silence, "your mother was one of the first among the Locarnese, who dispensed on her death-bed with a confessor; she was the very first in our infant church to be buried without the funeral parade of lighted torch and upborne cross. To my spiritual guardianship she bequeathed her infant. In darkness, through a snow storm, I guided a good pastor from Chiavenna hither, to assist me in baptizing you in the name of the Lord. Many times, since then, have I journeyed through perils by day and perils by night, to instruct your infant mind, and lead you, step by step, in the way of holiness. I have thought of you by day, and prayed for you at night, and this is the result! My daughter! you have walked with us as long as our path has led by peaceful stream and through the flowery valley, and now, at the first aspect of the desert and the precipice, you falter. Heedless of your dead mother, now a saint in glory, deaf to the thousand voices of the

slain martyrs of our church, which call you onwards, you choose rather to listen to the unholy pleadings of an earthly love, and you remain behind. My child, I am not wont to be so moved," for the old man's countenance kindled as he spoke, "but, in truth, I had not looked for this from you."

Barbara, who had listened to this appeal from her good pastor with a penitent heart, now arose, and with hands, meekly folded, said in a steady voice: "Father, forgive me! the doubts which did so sadly beset my mind have cleared away at your bidding. Forgive the error of my woman's heart; I will lay down even this treasure on the altar; I will follow Him who died for me, even unto death!"

On the next morning, the deputies sent by the seven Roman Catholic Cantons of Switzerland arrived in Locarno. Their first act was to assemble the inhabitants, and to read to them a threatening harangue. They accused them of disturbing the peace of the Helvetic body, and gave them only four-and-twenty hours wherein to make their decision. To this measure the municipal authorities subscribed their consent; the assembly dispersed; and now all was tumult and confusion in the usually quiet little town. Shops were closed; the market-place was empty; even the carriers, generally so busy transporting goods between Italy and Switzerland, tarried at home that day. It was a point that came home to the heart of every individual; for rumour even averred that it was the intention of the papal authority to prevent, if possible, such of the Locarnese who should prefer exile with freedom of conscience to apostasy, from taking with them either their property or their

children. The first, it was said, would be far better employed in the service of Holy Mother Church; and for the last, it would be an act of greater mercy to tear the babe from its mother's breast, than to suffer it to be brought up in heresy.

That night sleep visited but few couches in Locarno; day dawned, and a large body of the inhabitants repaired to the town-hall, professed themselves willing to abjure their errors, and besought forgiveness, and re-admission into the church.

In the afternoon another far different scene took place: the few, steadfast in faith and true in love, went up to shew themselves worthy of the name they bore. It was a solemn and beautiful sight: the grey-haired and the strong in youth, old men and delicate women, and young children, all met together in one righteous cause; ready at the call of truth to abandon home and country, and all the sweet associations of infancy, which had grown with their growth and strengthened with their strength. The prefect, Isaiah Reuchlin, walked at the head of the little procession, and deeming it right to make one effort to avert the impending blow, he stroked back the white hairs that shaded his forehead, and drawing himself up to his utmost height, he begged the deputies to inform him of what crime himself and his flock were accused.

"We," he said, "have diligently searched the Scriptures and compared together the Latin and Italian translations. Upon perfect conviction of its purity, we have adopted as our own, the creed of the holy Apostles; we do not wish to cause war; all we pray for is investigation. All we claim, is pity."

But the deputies sternly answered, "We come not

here to listen to your faith ; the lords of the seven provinces have decided theirs, and will not permit it to be disputed. We ask you in one word, will you abandon your heresy or not ?”

Then arose a murmur of many voices. “ We will live in our faith ; it is the only true one ; we will die in it.”

“ You will, then,” said one of the deputies, “ write down your names ; our clerks hold a register for the purpose, that we may know how to separate the chaff from the wheat !”

Isaiah Reuchlin was the first to obey this mandate, and his name was followed by that of Beccaria. There was one present in that assembly who ought to have been the next to advance, and she yet lingered, with dizziness in her head, and a feeling of sickly suffocation at her heart ; she yet stood leaning near the low pillar by which she had stationed herself on first entering the room ; her anxious eye wandered from one well known face to another, but none of her loved ones were there ; the companions of her sorrow had each some one to look to and weep with : the young girl turned to her mother, and the wife looked to her husband for support ; and a glance of affection, a pressure of the hand were as priceless treasures at that moment. Barbara alone had none to lean upon but the Invisible, for she was an orphan, and her husband had ceased from loving her. Not even Fiore was there ; so Barbara lingered till the very last, and then with faltering step and eye down-cast, as fearing to meet the gaze of those who might accuse her of vacillating in her purpose, she also drew nigh to the registering officer. What saw she on



the paper, that sent the blood in rich torrents to her cheek and brow, and lighted up her dark eye with unwonted energy and steadied her trembling hand ? Aye ! had she been signing her acceptance of a diadem, she would not have signed it with a feeling of such deep joy, as animated her now, while she also added her name to the long list of wandering exiles.

Lightly she leaped into the little bark that was to bear her home ; lightly she sprung up the marble steps of her own castle, for she saw Montalto awaiting her in the veranda : with a feeling almost of renewed hope she seized his hand and pressed it fondly to her lips, thanking him all the while with an ardour of joy that made her look again almost as beautiful as in the days of youth and happiness.

“Do not thank me,” said Montalto ; “surely you could not suspect me, Barbara, of harbouring so mean a purpose as that of deserting a falling cause ? Barbara, you know me to be fickle and ungrateful, and thoughtless ; but could you suspect me of cowardice ! Answer me ?”

“No,” answered Barbara ; and she spoke steadily ; for she spoke the perfect truth,—“I did not suspect you of cowardice ; I knew you were of too noble, too proud a nature for that ; but there were other feelings, other motives, which I thought would sway you—would prevent you from leaving Locarno.”

“Barbara,” said her husband, and he spoke more tenderly than he had spoken for years, “I understand you ; and you did not imagine the possibility of any other than yourself following me into poverty. You were right, lady,” he continued drawing her into the saloon, and seating himself by her. “I learned

last night a lesson I shall not soon forget. While the wife, whom I have so cruelly neglected, was making her noble determination to sacrifice every feeling to principle, another, for whom I have given up by far too much, scrupled not to tell me that the love that is born amid luxurious halls cannot brave the mountain winds, or exist amid mountain snows : she said that her voice loved better to mingle with the gay barcarolle, than with the wailing of the exile's hymn—that her step had been too long accustomed to carpetted floors, to tread now over pathless rocks. Barbara, to any other less noble-minded than yourself I should scarcely care to confess all this ; but my confidence in you shall be entire. You will believe me, when I say, that I sought not to change her purpose. From the instant I discovered the nature of her summer love, Olimpia's power was at an end."

That evening was the era from which Barbara dated the renewal of her happiness. They sat together, once again, in the confidence and love of early years, and talked over plans for the future. Barbara confessed that the severest part of her trial had arisen from her doubts as to Montalto's intentions ; and Montalto acknowledged that he had wished to try the strength of her piety and resolution.

The arrival of the papal nuncio, Riverda, caused much anxiety and commotion in the little city ; for it was known that he was a man capable of making every effort to carry into execution the dark threat which had already been whispered of.—He came, and did his utmost, but without success ; even the stern deputies would not hear of separating children from

their parents, although they were not so scrupulous as to sequestrating property : so all that he could do was to frame a decree, ordering the Locarnese, on the third of March ensuing, to set out—they knew not whither.

Barbara's implacable enemy, meanwhile, foiled in one scheme, was, nevertheless, not laid at rest.—A proclamation was issued that, on a certain day, Riverda would be glad to hear any, among the persecuted Protestants, who should have courage enough to show the reason of their belief. Again there was a meeting held in the town-hall ;—Riverda was the first to speak, and he accused the assembled Locarnese of heresy and contumacy. For some time deep silence prevailed ; but at last, as though to shame the nobler sex, a woman advanced, and repelled his accusation.

The lady, who seated herself opposite Riverda, was closely veiled, yet her low clear voice could be distinctly heard by every one in the assembly. Point by point she met Riverda's statements, and confuted his arguments, bringing forward words from the Holy Book in support of every assertion she made, which he could not gainsay ; so that at last he was fain to break up the assembly, and to declare that on some future day he would meet his fair antagonist again, and finish the discussion ; and Barbara was glad, though she trembled with womanly fear, that she had not let pass this opportunity of showing forth the goodness of the cause for which herself and her country-folks were willing, if necessary, to die. She arose to leave the hall,—she had confuted Riverda ; but she had changed him into a personal enemy.

The house of Barbara had been built, as we said before, in the stormy days of the Guelphs and Ghibellines. The front entrance, the one in constant use, faced the town of Locarno; but on the other side, and opening from the vaulted chapel, was a low iron door, of such solidity and weight, that it required the strength of six men to move it on its massy hinges.

On the night succeeding the day when Barbara had stood so boldly forward as a champion of the truth, Montalto awakened from an alarming dream. He closed his eyes:—again in slumber, he beheld the safety and life of his lady threatened; and this time the dream made so serious an impression on him, tintured slightly as he was with the superstition of the times, that he arose, and calling some of his domestics, gave orders that the little concealed door in question should be raised, and a boat held there in readiness.

Day had scarcely dawned, when a more tangible cause for fear presented itself. A loud knocking was heard at the entrance door. The officers of Riverda demanded instant admittance; and putting the servants roughly aside, made their way even into the presence of the mistress of the house.

They showed a warrant for the apprehension of the lady Barbara, wherein she was accused of having uttered blasphemies against the sacrifice of the mass.

The noble lady did not for an instant lose her presence of mind; but rising with her wonted dignity, and drawing a veil that was on the dressing-tabl over her head, she asked, in the calmest possible tone, permission to retire for a few minutes into the next room, for the purpose of arranging her dress, declaring at the same time her willingness, when that was done, to follow the officers.

Ten minutes,—a quarter of an hour elapsed,—and where was the lady?—Down, with the swiftness of thought, she had hastened by the turret staircase that led to the chapel;—the boat was ready, the boatmen within call, the oars were muffled; and when the officers in possession of the room above stairs, by way of amusing their ennui, walked to the window to look out over the fair lake, they had the satisfaction of seeing in the far distance, beyond all hope of pursuit, a swiftly-moving boat, and their destined victim reclining at ease within it.

It was on the third of March, 1555, that the party of wanderers set forth. The government of Milan had ordered its subjects not to receive any of the outcasts from Locarno, nor to give them shelter. A command was at the same time issued to the proscribed, not to remain above three days in the Milanese territories, on pain of death. The mournful little band bade farewell to fertile Lombardy, with many tears; they sailed round the northern part of Lago Maggiore, passed the Helvetian baillages, by way of Bellinzona, and before night, foot-sore and sorrowful, they reached Rogoreto: there, Barbara and Montalto, who had awaited them, joined the party. For two months their farther progress was stayed by the Alpine snows,—two sad and weary months, during which they subsisted on the sale of some trifling jewels, which Barbara had worn on the day of her hasty escape, and on the hospitality of the inhabitants. At last the thaw commenced; they were enabled to pursue their way;—some of them remained in the Grisons; above a hundred went on to Zurich:—their brethren of the faith in that hos-

pitiable and wealthy town had heard of the persecutions they had endured; they revived the weary spirits of the wanderers with words of kindly welcome, and offered them asylum and employment.

More than two years after this, Barbara received a letter from her young cousin, wherein Fiore deeply deplored the weakness and irresolution she had shown; she had lost the beloved husband who had been to her so fatally dear, and she said she thought she could discern the sternness of retributive justice, in the blow which had deprived her of the very object for which she had been content to forswear her truth; she told of bitter, of anguished repentance, and prayed to know whether, at that late hour, she might be permitted to lay down all, and follow whither Barbara had led the way.

This was the answer she received from her cousin:—

“Come to us, Fiore; there is room in our heart and in our home for you. I say our heart; for, since we have been in this blessed exile, Montalto and I have had but one heart. Thou knowest that in olden days, my husband was a fellow-student with Taddeo à Dunis, the good physician, who came hither beforehand to entreat an asylum for us. Taddeo has procured for Montalto employment, and now he labours with heart and hand for my support, and for that of my child. Yes, Fiore; God has blessed our little Swiss cottage with that which he denied to our palace home,—as if to show me that all happiness, all blessings, wait upon them who seek, albeit, with lingering foot and reluctant heart to do his will. All day long we labour, Montalto abroad, and I at home: but labour is sweet, for the cradle of my little one is

in a corner of our apartment; and when I draw near, she smiles. Thou knowest that all our property, houses, lands, money,—all was confiscated; but we are richer now than we were in our lake palace, and happier, infinitely; for though I go no more to join the stately assembly, or the merry dance, neither do I ever meet the darkling countenances of that bad Luigi, nor of his dangerous sister. We have neighbours to love and assist us; we have enough for content; and if ever I do, for one moment, regret the well-filled purse, when I am forced to refuse assistance to the needy, even then I console myself with the thought, that, just as we ourselves do derive more pleasure from the bunches of fruit and flowers, offered by the poor peasants who have nothing more to give, than we did in the days of our wealth, from the rich gems proffered by wealthy and noble friends, even so the trifle we can now spare from our own need, may be a fairer offering in the sight of God, than the large sums we gave and missed not out of our abundance.—Come to us, Fiore; I long to show you our tiny garden, full of rich fruit, and gay with Alpine flowers; I long to show you our neat and pleasant cottage, which I arrange with my own hands; and more than all, I long to show you my own Montalto, happy and affectionate, as he was in the first days of our wedded life, and my little Benvenuta, who is beauty and health personified.—Come to us, Fiore; we have room in our hearts and in our house for you: oh! come to us, and we will do our very best to bind the bruised reed, and to share with you that peace which the world can neither give nor take away.”

A DEATH-BED SCENE IN A PALACE.

BRIGHT, and warm, and cheering, were the sunbeams that lit up the old towers and castle windows of Pavia, on the morning which witnessed the triumphal entry of Charles the Eighth, of France. Ludovico Il Moro came forth to meet his noble ally, and the rejoicings and carousals that ensued had never been paralleled in that fair city. Alas! on what different scenes does the self-same sun arise;—his beams penetrated through a narrow window in one tower of the regal palace, and witnessed a scene that was far different from a scene of rejoicing.

"Come, Bona, come;" said a young and noble-looking boy, who, by climbing up into an antique high-backed chair, had contrived to obtain a momentary glance at the scene without; "Come, Bóna, come, and see this fine sight: there are noble cavaliers with white waving plumes, prancing on brave coursers from Barbary; and banners waving aloft, and images of the Holy Virgin, and bright ladies with jewelled head-gear;—come, sister, come hither!"

But the fair child whom he addressed arose not:—she continued rocking slowly, backwards and forwards, in her little chair, singing, in low whispered tones, an old nursery song.

"Come, Bona!" resumed the boy, somewhat impatiently; "cease that murmuring song, and come, look

on this brilliant procession.—Hark! the music rings forth: did you ever hear a burst so glorious? and, Bona, they are stopping at the palace gates.—What can they be coming for?”

The young child arose, but she went not to the window. She hastened to the far end of the room where, on a low couch, sick and suffering, her father reclined. Beside that bed of pain, knelt with bowed face hidden in the rich coverlet, a young fair woman; her long golden hair, her bright blue eyes, and downy cheek, seemed fitted only for haunts of happiness and sweet spring time; yet she would not have exchanged her lonely watch by the side of her dying husband for all the pleasures that life might yield. The little Bona seemed to think that, that too was her fittest place; for she knelt down timidly by her mother, and sought to put her little hands within those of the mourner.

“Pray, my child, pray,” said the Lady Isabel, “to him who calls himself the God of the fatherless.” The dying Galeazzo fixed his eyes upon the loved ones beside him. Weak and erring as he had been, fluctuating in purpose and feeble in execution; he yet loved tenderly the dear ones who knelt there in prayer for him, and his dim eye lighted up with something like hope, when it rested for a moment on the noble boy, who even yet might redeem the falling fortunes of his line. There was a deep silence in that room; the silence of anxious prayer and of affection, that feared every look might be its last.

Suddenly a noise arose,—a loud long laugh; and it was succeeded by the chorus of a merry hunting song. The sounds proceeded from the lower apartments of

the palace, and broke in on the sacred silence of the chamber, like the exulting cry of evil ones. The lady arose, and, stamping her little foot on the ground, she exclaimed, "Now, by our Lady, the usurper is not content with driving us into an obscure corner of our own fair palace, but even here he will not let us remain at peace. Would that I were a man but for one short hour, for thy dear sake, my own love ! then would I defy him to mortal combat, and trust to God for the success of the innocent !"

But Galeazzo, raising himself and supporting his aching head on the fair shoulder of his young child, who had clambered up on his couch, took the hands of Isabel, and fixing his dim eyes on her face flushed with indignation, said, "Calm yourself, dearest ! I am about to depart ; what avails it whether I die upon a throne, or on an humble pallet ? Your love would soften even the hard rock, if on it only I might find repose ! Isabel, we began life together, surrounded by all that men call precious ; the pride of rank and the luxury of wealth were ours. Now, our throne is wrested from us, our friends have departed ; but trust me, thy true faith and tender love have compensated me for all. Peace, then, Isabel ; and bless our spoiler, even as I do."

The lady's countenance, as she listened to Galeazzo's voice, became calm as was its wont. She began to speak in her accustomed low sweet voice, when the door of the apartment was opened by a page announcing the arrival of Charles VIII., who came in courtesy to visit his cousin. Preceded by a flourish of music, and accompanied by a brilliant train of courtiers, the monarch entered ; but he came not un-

watched or unguarded. Ludovico, the dark and ambitious usurper, was there also ; and when Charles drew nigh his cousin's pallet bed, Ludovico also advanced to prevent them from holding any private converse together. Something Galeazzo murmured of the tumult of noisy revels, held in his own palace, which disturbed him when he would sleep ; but Ludovico broke in upon his speech, and said to the king of France, "Our dear nephew is mending the physicians tell me, daily ; soon he will be able to join our assemblies below, held, as we all know, for state purposes, and with which we may not dispense. You will soon be the gayest among us, Giovanni ! and you will bring your young son with you ; it is many days since he has graced our court. Francesco, wilt thou come hither, my child ?"

The child came, but not with the air of one accepting a favour, or acknowledging it gratefully. His little face was red with passion : he caught the glittering hilt of Ludovico's sword, and exclaimed, "It is yourself, uncle, who have sent my father hither to perish ! When I too am a man, and wear a sword, then, be sure, I will do the like by you." The duke affected to laugh at his rebellious little relative ; but nevertheless changed colour, and turned quickly to see what effect this speech had produced on Charles. Charles heard it not ; for the Lady Isabel was kneeling at his feet, and entreating him with all the eloquence of a breaking heart, to have pity on herself and on her babes ; to resign his claim on her paternal inheritance, and turn away his arms from her aged father's kingdom. "Soon," she said, as well as her tears and sobs would permit her, "I shall be alone in the

world, and my babes will be fatherless ! I shall have no refuge in this land but Naples. I must return to my father's home, beggared and desolate. Let me not find that the sword of the noble king of France has made that home a ruin, and stained that hearth with the blood of my kindred !”

Charles raised the fair mourner : he was touched with her beauty, her eloquent tears, and her youth. He promised all that she asked ; his sword should be sheathed, her father should not be molested in his old age ; he would himself protect her right. Charles promised all that she asked, and she trusted to his word, for she was a woman, and knew nought of the power of ambition to blunt and deaden every kindly feeling. But Ludovico looked on, and a smile curled his proud look, for he was better versed in the ways of the world. Charles plighted his word, and speaking some fair-seeming words to Galeazzo, he turned, and with all his train retreated.

But this visit produced an effect they perhaps did not intend. Faint and failing was every breath that Galeazzo drew, and this excitement but hastened the crisis of his disorder. Isabel would call in no assistance ; she listened in trembling, yet subdued agony, to every half-broken word that fell from the lips, which in time past had vowed unto her the sweet vow of love ;—she herself would close the eyes which in time past had spoken to her things unutterably tender.

Long and weary was the vigil, that night, of the gentle lady ; but her courage and her patience never for a moment failed, and she had her reward ; for the closing eyes fixed on her their last look of lingering love.—“ My children ! my Isabel !” were the last

words of the prince ; the only words that broke that night on the stillness of the chamber of death.

The usurper flourished for many years after this ; his plans were successful, and his sword was victorious ; but at last retribution fell upon him. Sick and lonely, he too was laid upon his death-bed in a dark and wretched prison room in the castle of Loches. He was there utterly desolate, for neither relative nor friend clung to his fallen fortunes. He tossed on his unblest couch through weary days and fevered nights ; —but of all the visions of those whom he had injured in bye-gone days, which came now thronging to torment, each armed with a separate power to call forth signs and groans of anguish, the one which possessed a double power to terrify and wound, was the vision of a fair young creature and two hapless children !—whom he had deprived of father and protector !—whom he had robbed of state, station, and of inheritance !

EVENING THE FOURTH.

—What happy gale
Blows you to Padua here ?

SHAKESPEARE.

INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

Padua.

I AM afraid, dear Minna, that you, who so love to hear and to read of hill and forest scenery,—who acknowledge to feeling more interest in a wild flower or mountain shrub, than in the fate of nations, will be somewhat disappointed at seeing my letters continually dated from one or another populous city, and treating principally of life in its artificial state, and of life's busy actors. You must pardon me ; we travel rapidly from town to town, and it is not my fault that Sir Mark chooses rather to rest for the time being in a commodious hotel, than in a cottage by the roadside, or in a forest cave. Neither, indeed, am I quite sure that I have romance enough about me to disapprove of his very sensible proceeding.

Besides, bipeds, be they good, bad, or indifferent, are in any case more interesting than the fairest picture of inanimate nature. Fellow pilgrims with ourselves, journeying along the same rugged path towards the same peaceful haven; fellow sharers of the divine spark of immortality, which raises man to an immeasurable superiority over all other inhabitants of this round globe,—we are bound to feel deeply for the hopes and fears, and joys and sorrows of every child of earth. And it is a strong, as well as a beautiful tie with which every man feels himself linked to his brethren, though perhaps it is a tie which they, who have sorrowed most, are the most ready to acknowledge. The happy are sufficient unto themselves; it is not until the blow has fallen—and sooner or later it comes to all—which shows us the vanity of earth's fairest promises, the nothingness of earth's brightest dreams, that we cling to every creature's sympathy, and tracing our own life in that of another—the hope, the disappointment, the calm endurance—acknowledge with a sort of mournful satisfaction, that we share but the common lot, and feel that every child of sorrow is, with peculiar emphasis of meaning, a fellow-creature. Therefore is it that I dread to go into a gallery of paintings with Harry Dormer; for he is a connoisseur, devoted with all the enthusiasm of a young and ardent mind to his art; and while he stands entranced before some exquisite morceau of inconceivable antiquity,—a thumb, by Tintoretto—an eye-lash, by Domenichino—the twig of an owlet's nest, by Aldovrandus Magnus, I turn aside, albeit with fear and trembling, to look at some half finished daub,—a child playing at a cottage door,—a girl kneeling at

the shrine whereon her offering of flowers is laid,—a mourner with veiled and bowed head, praying over the tomb wherein the treasure of her heart reposes ; any thing, in short, that tells a tale of mortal hope or mortal suffering.

Thus for me, dearly as I, too, love cedar-forest and mountain-stream, and star-lit sky, our visits to these foreign cities, are replete with interest. Every cathedral peopled with old monuments, every corridor lined with family portraits, every musty volume of ancient legends, presents an infinite variety of pictures of life, as new as they are various ; and it pleases me right well to peer into the histories of people differing so much from those who have in real life crossed my path. I like to hear of the chivalrous bravery, the undying love ; of the steady faith, the disinterested patriotism, which led men in the olden time to account their own lives as nought in the balance, when the sacrifice of it was required. I like to read of these things, for they belong to a more highly wrought frame of mind than is prevalent in our own country, or in our own times ; and it is refreshing now and then to catch a glimpse at people whose god was not ambition, and who cared for money no farther than as it supplied the exigencies of the moment. Surely a great change must have fallen over the animate, as well as over the inanimate world ! Now we are all slaves to stars and ribbons,—to the sordid tenant of the mine, or to self ; and we go on plotting and accumulating along our weary way, forgetful of the higher order of existence, which ought to claim our deepest anxieties and hopes, till death approaches and whispers of the unthought-of future, in a voice that will not



be hushed ; but among the people and the times of which history offers some faint traces, it was not so !

The first city of any interest wherein we tarried after leaving Milan, was Brescia, which the Venetians of olden time used fondly to call the little daughter of St. Mark. While we were waiting for dinner, St. Roy related to us, from memory, some few particulars relative to this city, with which his extensive reading and good memory readily supplied him. He told us how it had been swayed successively by the Visconti and by the Malatesti of Rimini, and how Carmagnuola had won it back for Filippo Maria, and afterwards sought to obtain it for Venice, when serving the Signory as captain of their armies. It is easy to understand his rapid and brilliant success. The city was enclosed by three ramparts at considerable intervals. The citadel was on a hill, without the city. Brescia was in those days distracted by the rival factions of the Guelphs and Ghibellines : these last admitted Carmagnuola into the citadel. Once there, his activity soon accomplished the rest ; the lines of contravallation and circumvallation which he drew between that part of the city which refused to surrender, and that part which he himself occupied, are described by the writers of the day, as something almost exceeding human strength to execute, and the human mind to imagine.

Nearly a hundred years afterwards, in 1512, Gaston de Foix and his comrades established themselves in this same citadel, while the town was possessed by their enemies, the Venetians. The Venetians had

long desired to call Brescia their own; it was valuable on account of its own importance, as well as for its ready communication with Verona. They had friends within the city, but none dared assist them after the terrible example made of Count Martinengo, by the Baron de Conti. That, however, which neither force, cunning, nor treason could effect, was at last curiously enough brought about by a quarrel between two children. The Lords de Gambara and de Avogara had each a son, about the same age, who were one day playing together. Gambara struck his companion and wounded him dangerously. Avogara demanded satisfaction of the Duke of Nemours, who was then at Milan, but obtained none; and his indignation prompted him to seek revenge on all the French. He repaired to Venice; the Doge received him with open arms; Avogara explained his plans, and the Doge promised, that on a given day, Andrea Gritti should be before the city with seven or eight thousand men. He in the mean time returned home, tampered successfully with his townsfolk, and on the appointed day, a general rising took place.

The French governor, surprised, could neither rally his men nor oppose two armies; he retreated to the citadel; every one that could not escape was massacred; not a prisoner was made. The Countess de Gambare ran for her life, and the first thing Avogara did, was to burn, pillage and destroy all the houses and lands belonging to Gambara.

The next thing was to obtain the citadel; but this was no easy task. Gaston de Foix held it, and he made himself as sure of being finally victorious as did the Venetians. Willing to spare the fair city, Gaston

summoned Gritti to surrender, but was answered with a haughty defiance to do his worst. Bayard led on the forlorn hope; and we are told by Bayard's chronicler, that the descent from the hill on which the citadel stood, being slippery by reason of the late abundant rains, Gaston and most of his officers pulled off their shoes ere they began to descend. It was here that Bayard was wounded by a pike, which broke, so that a part of the weapon remained in the wound, and he continued to urge on his men to the siege in spite of it. The French entered, and it is said that seven thousand of their enemies fell in the vanquished city. Neither did the assailants wholly escape, for the women,—oh! what has woman to do in such a scene!—poured stones and boiling water from the windows upon them. Twenty thousand beings perished, while the pillage continued; and the very heart would turn sick with horror, and we should close the pages of the chronicler in dismay, if even here, we did not suddenly light upon one of those beautiful little incidents, which sometimes break in upon the histories of battles and sieges, and show that human feeling, and mortal tenderness do dwell even in the tented field and in the leaguered city, where men meet together for mutual destruction.

Bayard was carried to the door of a house, the mistress of which, with the daughters, had hidden herself in some straw in a granary, "under the protection of the Almighty." The mother came to the knocking at the door, and Bayard, observing, in spite of the agony of his wound, her intense fear, placed sentinels at the gate, and gave his name as a watchword of defence.

He next sent for the master of the house, who had taken refuge in a neighbouring convent, and assured the whole family of his protection. His wound confined him for some weeks, during which time the noble dame nursed him tenderly, and her fair young daughters did sing to him, and play on the lute and spinnet, and sit by his couch, embroidering their delicate lady's-work.

At his departure the matron, who had all along considered herself but as a captive, brought him two thousand five hundred ducats in a casket, and on her knees besought him to accept it as ransom money. Bayard raised her instantly, besought permission to say farewell to her young daughters, and when they entered and thanked him for having been the guardian of their honour, the knight, almost weeping at their gratitude and gentle bearing, said, "Fair maidens, we knights are ill provided with goodly toys for ladies' eyes; and I grieve that I cannot offer you some love token as is your due; but your lady mother has here given me a sum of money, which I return to you for your dowries, praying only that ye will be pleased to pray to God for my well-doing."* At his departure the fair girls presented him, the one with two bracelets woven with brown hair, and with gold and silver threads,—the other with a crimson purse, subtilly embroidered; and the brave knight gallantly fastened the purse on his sleeve, and the bracelets on his arm, and vowed to wear them for the honour of the fair donors, while his life endured.

While talking over this history of our favourite

* *Histoire de Chevalier Bayard.*

Bayard, no wonder we traversed the streets of Brescia with interest, amusing ourselves as we went on, by fancying every peculiarly noble-looking old mansion was the one honoured by the chevalier's presence. May even hazarded a conjecture, as to whether Bayard's fair young friends dressed their hair in the olden day as very unbecomingly, as did the Brescian ladies who passed us, in one large clumsy-looking plait, fastened with double-knobbed silver bodkins, which said knobs, sometimes elaborately filligreed, protruded most awkwardly an inch or more from each side of the head. Presently, May, gazing with entranced eye at a convent, by the roadside, and heedless of her way, stepped unadvisedly into a puddle. A young student, as we knew by his three-cornered cap, immediately crossed the road and assisted her out of the dilemma, in a manner so gentle and so respectful, that we could not but wish some of our English fashionables had been there, to take a lesson of politeness. Construing the girl's smiling thanks into tacit permission to continue her escort, he walked on with the party to the excavations; and there, bodkins, puddles, students, and even our dear Bayard, all were awhile forgotten, as we stood entranced before one of the most splendid specimens of ancient art that we had yet seen.—I knew not that it was the work of one of those glorious Greeks, the fathers of the imitative art,—perhaps of Phidias, or even Chares himself;—I knew not that it was considered by connoisseurs to be faultless in form, exquisite in expression;—I knew only, while looking on that ancient statue of Victory, that I experienced newer, loftier ideas of the dignity of virtue, of the

grace of severe beauty ;—I felt only that, had I been a man, I could have died joyfully on the battle field, so had I only been assured that my name, too, should be inscribed on her shield. No wonder that Spartan mothers could educate their children to conquer or to die ;—no wonder that Spartan wives could bid their lords speed to the battle fray, and veil the silent agony with a smiling face, if such was the aspect victory wore, when throned among the lares of their hearts ! These excavations were begun about six years since. A poor vine-dresser, digging his ground, found, first, a frieze, then a shattered column,—the fragment of a head ; so at last, the field was bought, and excavations on a large scale were commenced.—A temple (ruined, of course,) came to light : it had been dedicated to Hercules, and was burnt, it is supposed, about a century and a half before the birth of Christ. Some of the heads were very perfect, and the gilding on them scarcely injured by time. Among the exhumed treasures were some Mosaic pavement ; stones inscribed with the names of Domitian, Augustus, and Severus ; some medals and heads of the Roman emperors ; traces of the spot whereon the doors had stood, and of the square enclosure wherein the priests examined the victims, might be distinctly seen :—they had also raised a modern altar, on the spot where they imagined the old one to have been placed ; but this was an instance of bad taste, rather uncommon in the Italians.

The road was pretty from Brescia to Verona, running along the foot of the Apennines, and diversified with troops of soldiers, bands of friars, market-women laden with fruit and flowers, little carriages, just

large enough to hold one person,—which St. Roy said might, with some propriety indeed, be termed *boudoirs*—peasants, &c., till at last we reached Verona.

The Coliseum stands in the heart of the city, and is far more perfect than the one at Rome; but four arches of the outer wall remain; the inner walls are untouched by time. Of course we entered, and mounted the marble steps. As we stood on the broken and rugged wall, now overgrown with grass and wild flowers, and looked down from thence over the city of Verona, rich in many touching remembrances,—then around at the countless spires, and afar off, at the blue and snow-capped Alps in the distance, talking all the while of Roman heroes and gladiators—of Byron and of Shakspeare, realizing, as it were, by our actual presence, the existence of one lofty memento of the brave, proud people who have passed away,—we could not but acknowledge this day to be a day to be held in remembrance, as one that should stand out in distinct relief from the sameness and weariness of life.

It is amusing to observe the different trains of thought excited in different minds by the same object. Sir Mark set down carefully in his pocket-book the guide's information,—that the amphitheatre contains forty-five ranges of seats; that they will accommodate twenty-two thousand spectators; and that the outer wall is 1290 feet in circumference:—also, he noted that a bull-baiting was exhibited here, in honour of the Emperor Joseph, by the governor and people, when a Roman emperor was again hailed in a Roman amphitheatre with the titles of Cæsar and Augustus. This must have been an imposing sight; yet less so

than when, still more recently, the Pope, passing through Verona, was implored to bless the people; and the multitude, flocking in from the neighbouring provinces, collected in the amphitheatre, as the most spacious place of rendezvous, and prostrated themselves there before him. Our guide professed to remember this circumstance, but he could not recollect the name of the Pope, or the year in which it took place.

All this while Harry was repeating earnestly to Violet, who listened quite as earnestly, those few exquisite lines, in which Byron throws in the last finishing touches to the personification of the Gladiator; while St. Roy was trying to persuade himself and May, that he could distinguish the very spot in one of the dark gorges of the Alps, inhabited by that interesting remnant of the Cimbri and Teutones, who still fondly retain the tradition of their origin and the language of their forefathers. These tribes came from the northern Chersonesus, and invaded Italy in 640; they were defeated and almost extirpated, by Marius, near Verona; and the few who escaped formed a tiny colony, which, from its poverty and insignificance, has eluded the notice of the contending parties who have desolated Italy for nearly two thousand years. I would willingly have accompanied St. Roy to visit these living mementoes of the olden day:—talk of being old-fashioned; here would be a delightful specimen of venerable antiquity!

Verona is built on the Adige, which divides it into two equal parts: it is situated at the foot of the Alps, at the southern opening of the great defile through Rhetia. It has ever been exposed to the first fury of

the ultra-montane invaders; but it seems to have suffered less than many other cities, its beauty having served it, as beauty very seldom does serve, as a defence; for many of its conquerors, from Theodoric down to Frederic II., delighted with its aspect, or struck by its situation, have resided here, and ornamented the city.

It is rich in having been the birth-place of talent,—Catullus, Cornelius Nepos, Pliny the Elder, and Vitruvius were born here. Here too, for a time at least, Dante, immortal Dante resided, under the patronage of Can Grande della Scala. The anecdote recorded of Dante's spirited indignation at a low practical jest of his patron, gives us unwittingly a curious insight into the manners of that day, in one of the most polished cities in polished Italy: "The little boy placed by the jester under the table, to gather all the bones that were thrown down upon the floor by the guests," &c.

On we went from Verona the ancient, through Vicenza the beautiful.—Palladio!—that one word is sufficient to give you an idea of its beauty. Passing on our way fragments of arches, broken temples, houses adorned with statues until we reached Padua the learned; from whence, my dear Minna, I send you this packet. Handle it carefully; break the seal with due reverence, although you never broke seal of mine reverently before; for the very Paduan paper and pens have an air and an aspect that savour of science! However, you need not be too much alarmed,—I am scribbling with one of my own grey goose quills.

Padua is a grand city,—a very grand city; every house looks like a school, and every palazzo like an

university. I may add, every man looks also like a schoolmaster, so heavy in aspect, so rectangular in movement, so all-over-wise. The university was founded towards the close of the eleventh century, and to it all nations flocked. Even Turks, Persians and Arabians came hither for improvement, especially in the sciences of botany and medicine; and nobles used to aspire at becoming professors in it. Here Petrarch mused and poetized; here Galileo traced the plan of the starry heavens, and measured the altitude of other worlds: here Columbus drew charts, and read the old manuscripts of discoveries, which inflamed his own ambition, and here he pondered on the possibility of the existence of another hemisphere. Surely there must be something of inspiration in the very air of Padua; but there is one little old dilapidated palazzo here, which interests me more than the grand university itself. It was pointed out to us as having been, in the long by-gone, the house of Petrarch: hither Boccaccio came to bring to Petrarch the decree of the Florentine republic which restored his patrimony. What a delightful interview! People talk of the jealousy and envy existing between men of talent. Petrarch and Boccaccio were a splendid exception to this remark, even if it should be of more general acceptation than I like to allow it to be. Boccaccio read or copied Petrarch's works, while Petrarch thought and wrote, perhaps worked hard at the Virgil we saw at Milan, on the lid of which Laura's death is recorded, and when evening came on they withdrew into the pleasant garden, and there, under the sweet shade of a fair orange-tree, cherished peculiarly by Petrarch himself, they held their happy and confidential dis-

course: they talked of ancient literature, of their love for their own sunny land, of their plans for the well-being of their countrymen, and stopped occasionally it might be to enjoy the fragrance of the flowers around, and to listen to the thousand harmonies of nature. Yes, poets are, they must be, happy creatures; they find a thousand sweet and lovely wild flowers in the care-strewn path of life, which the man of ambition, and the man of wealth have not time to stoop and gather. An opening rose-bud, a stream of sunshine in the sky, the song of the unseen bird, are for them sources of happiness. These things supply them with pleasant thoughts, and unlock the springs of love and gratitude which dwell in their hearts making there an ever-pleasant place of peace and inward joy.

A picture not less lovely than this is drawn by Boccaccio, in one of his letters to Petrarch, of a visit paid by himself to Petrarch's daughter Francesca, who was married and residing at Venice. "I went," he says, "to see your daughter, she was abashed, blushed, and cast down her eyes, and then after a timid welcome, she offered me your house, your books, every thing belonging to you.

* * * * *

"While we were conversing, your little granddaughter came up; she looked smilingly at me, and I took her with delight in my arms. At first I thought I saw my own child: the same smile, the same eyes, the same carriage, though a little taller, for mine was only five years and a half old when I last saw her. Alas! while caressing and talking to her, the recol-

lection of my loss drew tears from my eyes, so that I turned away to conceal my emotion."

We have all a curiosity concerning the domestic lives of our favourites, and I must own, I like even Petrarch the better, for this little sketch of his modest and interesting daughter, who withdrew her foot from public amusements and assemblies, and sought only how she might please her husband, and nurture her child; and this passage of Boccacio's letter is more eloquent to my mind than even his story of Griselda, which Petrarch learned by heart, and communicated to Chaucer, our own Chaucer; and which, it is said, his accustomed reader could never get through without tears.

We enjoy ourselves here much according to our several tastes; I alone am impatient to quit this wise city; for the next spot wherein we shall tarry will be Venice. Minna! I have a childish impatience to be there, for the word is a charmed word to me. Of course we pick up what anecdotes we can concerning the history of the city, and St. Roy told us one last night, which forcibly reminded me of a Scottish tradition.

In 1509, Padua being in possession of the emperor Maximilian, was recovered by the Venetians by a curious stratagem.

Andrew Gritti and Luke Malvezzo had secret intelligence with some of the inhabitants; Maximilian had left but eight hundred lancers to hold the place. It was in July, in the time of hay harvest, which harvest is singularly abundant in the environs of Padua, that these two Venetian noblemen concealed themselves

with four hundred men-at-arms, and two thousand foot-soldiers in a thick wood near the city. The waggon used for the transport of the hay are singularly cumbersome, and so large as to fill up the city gates,—on this circumstance they laid their plan. At day dawn they sent five waggon loads of hay forward, and the last was followed by six chevaliers, each having behind him a foot soldier, armed with an arquebuss, and among them was a trumpet to sound the alarm when the fitting moment should come.

On the other side the garrison was very vigilant; it allowed but two gates to be opened at a time, and each gate was guarded by thirty men; the last waggon having entered, the six men at arms cried out “Marco! Marco!” the foot-soldiers jumped down, and fired with such good aim that each one killed his man; the blast was blown; the inhabitants, who were in secret intelligence with the Signory, came forth, headed by Magurn: Andrea Gritti with his men galloped forwards, and the lancers, although they defended themselves bravely for two hours, were forced to yield to numbers.—Thus the Venetians regained Padua.

We reserved our budget for our last evening here, when all other materials of amusement—pens, pencils, books, &c. were packed up; and truly it may be owing to this circumstance, that we read the same with pleasure. I cannot expect you to enjoy our tales and scraps with half the zest we do; you who, in happy England, book-loving England, can afford to be fastidious, and reject this as being prosy,—that for its sentimentality,—the other because it is

too trifling. Do not, I beseech you, put on your criticising aspect now. Smile at the absurdities; it will do you good to laugh; and bear in mind, if it please you, that we send from these far-off cities, not what we would, but what we can. Picture to yourself the dilapidated room in the *Stella d'Oro*, full of creaks and crevices, through which the wind whistles right mournfully; the scanty furniture—a few moth-eaten couches—an old piano from Vienna, from which even the sounds which *Musica* elicits, resemble nothing more harmonious than a grunt. Then fancy a wood fire blazing on the hearth; a table close at hand covered with glasses and decanters, and the rich fruits of the south; one traveller sleeping contentedly the time away,—another bending over a parcel of loose papers, with an aspect somewhat disconcerted by the rough, uneven, and hasty scrawls,—three or four more working, knitting, and listening,—two children as earnestly, and perhaps as profitably employed as any of the group, with their cat's cradle,—a little spaniel perched in the warmest corner, his pert nose and bright eyes upturned towards the reader, with an occasional wag of the tail, to intimate that he also is all attention; and you will, I hope, perceive, that it is possible to be at home any where,—to be contented in very spite of windows that will not open, and of doors that will not shut.

It is a good thing, and a wise, to be able, with a few books and a little needle-work, to give any room, however strange and desolate, a look of home,—to be able to pursue our usual employments any

where, at a moment's notice : and a blessing beyond wealth, beyond beauty, or even beyond talent, is that cheerful temperament which can rejoice in the sunshine, yet be merry in the shade ; which can delight in the birds' singing in spring, yet solace itself with the heart's own music, when winter is at hand.

THE LEGEND OF JULIET.

It was a church built in the olden time,
 In a bright land and in a southern clime,
 Whose fretted roofs and carved columns stood
 Over the tomb of Lazarus the good ;
 And many came to pay a trembling vow
 To one, who, while he sojourned here below,
 Had shared like fate with them.

* * * *

And there came one, the last of a proud race,
 Long 'mid the lofty had he held high place ;
 His mien was noble, and his bearing proud,
 Yet was his spirit by misfortune bowed.
 He came dejected — sorrowful — alone,
 To weep the crimes of others,—not his own ;
 Disgrace, all undeserved, had stained the name,
 So long held spotless in the list of fame.
 He lov'd to steal from the cold world apart,
 For he had proved its hollowness of heart,
 Had mourned the false ones, who, when grief drew nigh,
 Left him alone, to suffer and to die.
 Oh ! 'tis a harsh, hard lesson for the young,
 The fond, the trusting, when first forced to turn
 From the sweet visionary dreams, that long
 Have shown the world all truth and worth ; to learn
 How vain the tears, how vainer still the smiles
 With which each man his fellow-man beguiles !

So Montecoli came, —apart from all
The toil and pageant of the vain world's thrall,
To weep in silence, at St. Lazar's shrine,
Over the fallen fortunes of his line,
And muse in the deserted chapel's gloom,
On other fairer worlds—beyond the tomb.

There came a festival. He little cared
To look upon the pleasures he had shared ;
'Twas for the poor, and custom held that some
Fair girl of Verona should hither come,
To beg for comforts for the poor man's home ;
And Montecoli — he who once had given,
Freely as fall on flowers the dews of heaven,
Had now but prayers and tears, and scarce might spare
From his own sorrows either tear or prayer.
But see what vision through the gloom is stealing,
The beauty of an angel face revealing,—
Youthful as Hebe, as Aurora fair,
And lovely as a poet's dreamings are.
Her fairy figure glides with noiseless tread
Over the silent mansions of the dead.
A maiden sure of lofty birth, for pearls
Sleep 'mid the radiance of her golden curls,
And diamonds sparkle on her tiny zone,
Numerous as though by fairy fingers thrown.
Oh ! not the hymn breathed at the morning hour,
By unseen spirits to Almighty power,
When the young day bids all that live rejoice,
Equals the music of her lute-like voice,
As low she proffers her sweet prayer : " For they
Who, poor and lowly, tread life's narrow way,
Some little gift !"—Love, that in our cold clime,
Needs all the care and tenderness of time,
Is fanned at once, where warmer skies have power,
Into existence. From that fateful hour

Not fortune's frown, not beauty's smile or sigh,
 Could chase from Montecoli's memory,
 Where love, the leveller, too often brought her,—
 The touching vision of Capelli's daughter.

The scene was changed. It was a stirring sight,
 A spacious plain made ready for the fight.
 A tourney, whither, at the duke's behest,
 Italia sent her bravest and her best,
 And many a young and gallant noble came,
 Sweet guerdon from the bright eyes round to claim.
 And where were they, the student and the girl,
 With robe of satin, and with wreath of pearl?
 Two years had passed. Under a feigned name,
 His own right arm had won him health and fame.
 He had exchanged his calm and cloistered life,
 For toil and revel, victory and strife,
 And all for her. Amid the noise, and glare,
 And din of battle, came a vision fair,
 With pleading look, and voice that spoke of heaven,
 To whisper mercy, ere the blow was given.
 Once, when the fight was hottest, he had stayed
 The deathblow on his javelin; for, lying
 Uncared for by the young and brave, who made
 Their path above him, an old man was dying.
Stefano bore him tenderly away,
 Far from the noise and tumult of the fray,
 And all for love of her!—And now he stands,
 For love of her, among the warrior bands,
 Fire in his eye, and on his lofty brow
 The pride that hopes of victory bestow.
 His meek device befits the borrowed name,
 That dares not lay to beauty's notice claim:

Bowed by the tempest, beaten by the storm,
A violet bends its fair and fragile form ;
And this the motto, " Shrinking from the breeze,
I look to bloom in brighter days than these."
At Della Scala's own right hand, a place,
The queen of the rude revel deigns to grace,
Beneath a canopy, emblazoned fair,
With quaint devices and embroidery rare,
And slightly raised above the high-born dames,
Who scarce admit so young a maiden's claims,
A fair girl sits. Sure, grief and woe are things
Unknown e'en to her heart's imaginings.
But look again. Rubies are on her brow,
And sparkle round her swan-like throat below ;
Her young cheek glows beneath their brilliancy,
But yet, 'tis paler than it ought to be.
Her eye, like lightning on a summer day,
Flashes and fades as suddenly away.
And when the gay and graceful throng, to pay
Their homage to the princess of the day,
Alike their homage and their flatteries fall
Unnoticed on her ear. She bends on all
The glance that speaks not, and the careless smile
That tells her thoughts are wandering all the while.
Why tell we of the valour shown that day ?
Why speak we of the movements of the fray ?
Such song of tumult, and such theme of fire,
Are all unfit for woman's gentle lyre.
Stefano was the victor. Who but he
Had such strong cause to strive for victory ?
And now the crisis of his fate draws nigh,
For which he had been vowed to strive or die ;
His heart is prostrate, and his knee is bent
Before the fair queen of the tournament,
His visor falls, and the young girl stoops down,
To bind his temples with the laurel crown.

Said I, her cheek was colourless ? Oh, now,
 The rubies pale beside its burning glow !
 Her father hastens to sustain his child,
 And, "Holy Virgin," cries in accents wild,
 "Thou here ! whom I have sought so long in vain,
 Who bore me dying from the battle plain,
 My brave deliverer ! thou no more shalt roam,
 But in my palace, find for life a home.
 All, all is thine ; and my fair child shall be,
 A sister fond and innocent to thee.
 Juliet look up ; one smile, my love, bestow
 On him who saved thee from an orphan's woe,
 For me he placed his all, his fame at stake,
 Love him, my Juliet, for thy father's sake."

Another scene.—It was an ancient hall,
 Where time had spread his mournful veil o'er all ;
 The silent walls were eloquent in praise
 Of noble feats performed in other days,
 And scrolls were brodered in the tapestry there,
 Inscribed with lofty names and titles fair,
 And pictures all around of many a form,
 That once had been with pride and beauty warm,
 Hung there, to show how chivalry and grace,
 For long-past years had decked Cappelli's race.
 At the far end, beside a heap of wood
 Piled in a deep recess, for winter, stood
 Two giant lamps, whose dim and flickering light,
 Through the vast chamber shed a faint twilight.
 And they were there, the young and fond again,
 Loving, albeit they knew their love all vain.
 It is deep happiness, at the sweet hour
 When eve assumes her soft and dreamy power,
 To watch with the beloved one, the day

From the dim world steal tenderly away :
To sit in silence, and to feel the heart
Swell with the feelings it may not impart.
It was strange contrast to look on the same,
A fairy picture in a cumbrous frame.
The girl, all redolent of youth and bloom,
And the dark grandeur of that ancient room.
Juliet sat by her harp and o'er it leant,
As her soul dwelt within her instrument.
He too was there, and his rich voice in song,
Floated all sadly with its strain along.

SONG.

Shadows darken, evening sendeth
Over all her misty light;
Memory mourns, and fancy lendeth
Bliss denied to day's warm light.

All is silent. Birds are sleeping
Safely in their own home tree ;
Flowers their tears round us are weeping,
Could I breathe my soul to thee !

One lone thought within it burneth,
Which I never may express :
Every hour, as hour returneth,
Adds to its sad tenderness.

In the day it hovers round me,
Robs my lonely couch of rest ;
Soon in slumber 'twill have bound me,
Dreamless sleep, the last, the best.

His song was hushed—the maiden did not speak,
But tears unbidden fell on her pale cheek ;
What marvel then, if Stefano forgot
The shame, the sorrow, of his lowly lot,
And Juliet's birth, and old Cappelli's pride,
And all the frowns of all her race beside.
His own resolves—his deep and bitter fears,
And all the world, but Juliet and her tears ;
Low at her feet he fell, and words of flame,
Such as men speak but once, from his heart came ;
Few are the words—but in his deep dark eyes,
A world of fond and passionate meaning lies,
Her little hand within his own is prest,
And his long-guarded secret is confest.
Oh, where was Juliet's pride ?—not with her then,
For the girl loved and was beloved again ;
Aye, all of happiness that we may know,
While wanderers in this weary world below,
Lies in those few brief words—in after hour,
Come dreams of fame, of rivalry, and power,
To fill the desolate void that holds a part,
Or more or less in every mortal heart.
But like the Aloe's flowers that once we view,
And only once—are the hours brief and few,
That bathe the spirit in a flood of light,
Making all persons and all things look bright,
When love, the serpent, in the young heart steals,
And shows his brightness, but his sting conceals.
So there they sat, forgetting time and tide,
And all the changes of the world beside,
Content with their own deep and silent bliss,
Too pure to linger in a world like this,
Where all things fairest are the soonest past.
Hearken ! what means that low and wailing blast,
Low, yet most sullen, one of those dark things,
That blanch the cheek and stay thought's wanderings ;

Downward it rushes, thro' the chimney wide,
And turn the lamps that burn there, side by side ;
Aye ! both are quenched, oh, the heart's omens ! this
Throws blight on their short time of love and bliss.
Oh, the heart's omens ! Juliet felt that hour,
Her spirit quail as to some viewless power,
That evening was an emblem of her fate,
At first all bright—at last all desolate.
Stay we the chronicle—but one scene more,
Our task—life's changes, will for them be o'er.

The last.—Their love had been a thing of gloom,
Born in the precincts of the lowly tomb,
And there too, was its closing scene, aye come,
And see of wealth, rank, beauty, the last home,
Rich banners blazon on the walls to tell,
How here the proud ones of the city dwell.
'Tis pride's last effort, impotent as vain,
To lengthen after death his empty reign.
Oh thou, whose eye perchance this trifling page,
In idle mood may for an hour engage,
Hast thou e'er gazed with dark and envious eye,
When pomp in golden car moved proudly by ;
Come here, behold the common lot of all,
Born of the sinful—doomed to sin's dark thrall,
Hast thou e'er sighed for brow and cheek of bloom,
Come now and gaze on Juliet in her tomb.
Juliet !—we spoke anon of a fair girl,
With speaking glance, bright cheek and brighter curl,
Glad step and ringing voice, a thing of light,
Free as the breeze and as the rainbow bright ;
Can this be her—stretched on a cold dark bier,
Untouched alike by dream of hope or fear,

Her cheek is pale, all utterly—her eye,
Closed like a sleeping violet—and lie
Her arms wont to be starred with many a gem,
Like lilies faded on their broken stem,
Of all who thronged her summer hours to cheer,
Who watches now beside her lowly bier !
Her father, proud and sullen in his grief,
In public duty seeks a stern relief,
Her mother weeps the last of her fair race,
Yet dares not look on her dead daughter's face.
Who watches by her bier ?—the one to whom
The world henceforth is drearier than the tomb,
He who no thought of weariness can sway,
No terror, real or fancied, drive away.
Oh love ! undying love—others may be,
In life, as fond, as generous, as thee,
But thine the mournful privilege alone,
Still to watch on when hope and life are gone,
Kindred and friends may seek to serve and save,
But thine alone, the task—to watch the grave.
He too is changed, his pale and weary brow,
Speak not of hope, or of hope's promise now,
His mournful eye, 'tis not with tears, is dim,
For tears are sweet, and they are not for him.
At times he speaks, and his sad tones express,
All that the heart can dream of loneliness,
And these the words that lonely silence breaking.
“ Juliet awake ! she is not dead, but sleeping ; ”
Alas, for his fond fantasy ! in vain,
He looks to see her wake to life again,
Once more he bends, and now some sudden thought,
A glow of pleasure to his brow has brought,
See, a dark vial in his hand is gleaming,
“ Juliet ! my own, I come to share thy dreaming ! ”
Paleness more livid o'er his brow is spread,
'Tis over now—he numbers with the dead.

Alas for him ! and is it thus the brave,
The true, the fond, sink in the silent grave ?
Alas for him ! and for that maiden fair !
But soft !—she moves ; what magic power is there ?
Her dying lover's first, last passionate kiss,—
Called it the maiden, from her dream of bliss ?
That tremulous farewell, so fondly spoken,
Woke it an echo, in a heart thus broken ?
Rises the maiden, wondering at the gloom,
And the chill darkness of her lowly home :
One hand is press'd in thought on her pale brow ;
Yes, yes ! she feels and she remembers now,
The sleeping draught—the padre's plighted vow,
To free her in the stilly hour of night ;
Her wandering eye gleams round the tomb, and now
Rests, where the taper sheds its trembling light
On her dead lover !—No deep burst of grief,
Flows from her lip and gives her heart relief ;
She ever knew the beauty and the bloom
Of happiness was not upon her doom ;
And Juliet smiles at fate—and death, to her,
Is of all peace and hope the harbinger :
One hand in Montecoli's hand is press'd ;
She closes her meek eyes, and sinks to rest.

Long years !—aye centuries, have passed away,
Since the sad closing of that fateful day ;
A fair cathedral there was raised to keep
Guard o'er the spot where truth and beauty sleep ;
Of all its fairy fretwork, pictured panes,
And fluted columns, not a trace remains.
Heroes have conquered, kings have lived and died,
And passed forgotten in time's whelming tide ;
And many great and lofty names, away
Have fallen from man's memory since that day,

When, freed from care and grief, they ceased to sigh,
And side by side, they laid them down to die ;
Yet in the twilight hour, what maiden hears,
The legend of sweet Juliet without tears ?
Aye, there is that in truth which claims a sigh,
A tear, a throb, from all who wander by ;
The deeds of science and of battle's glory
Are all forgotten in love's simpler story ;
Years may roll on, while there are hearts that glow,
At woman's tenderness and woman's woe ;
At that deep passion to the tomb that brought her,
We still must sorrow for Cappelli's daughter.

A CHAPTER FROM THE HISTORY OF BAYARD.

DURING the siege of Padua, the besiegers were often annoyed by sallies from the besieged, and also by little skirmishing parties from Trevisa, about twenty miles distant, commanded by the Duke Malvezzo. This veteran, two or three times a week, would fall unexpectedly on some straggling party of Frenchmen. If their numbers were greatly inferior to his own he would attack them. If they chanced to be headed by Bayard he would retire, for he knew he had as much chance of success when advancing against that worthy as had the Psylli, when they undertook a hostile expedition against the south wind. Bayard became tired of this at last, and he said to Cropte Daillon and la Clayète, two of his especial cronies, "This Captain Malvezzo wakens us rather too often and too early in the morning; let us show him with whom he has to deal. To-morrow we will give him the meeting; he has kept at home for two days, therefore we shall probably see him."

Bayard had some spies whom he paid so well that they were ready to risk their lives for him. One of them had made him acquainted with the numbers of Malvezzo and his intended route. Bayard's friends accepted his proposal; it was a party of pleasure for them; so at two o'clock in the morning they met, each one bringing with him thirty well-armed followers.

They mounted quietly without any needless flourish of trumpets, and the spy was placed foremost, escorted by four soldiers, who had orders, if he should show the least sign of treason, to poniard him. On they went quietly through the still night, scarcely venturing to whisper one to another, until they reached at day-dawn a large and magnificent country house, standing in the midst of a pleasant flowery garden. They met with no one to interrupt their progress, although it was very evident that the palazzo had been recently inhabited. In the eating-room they found a table spread with wine, fruit, and various good things, with which the men seemed very desirous of cultivating acquaintance. Bayard knowing they would fight all the better after having refreshed the inner man, permitted them to make themselves comfortable, giving them merely an injunction to behave like gentlemen; and he, stimulated by curiosity, went farther on to explore a little oriel-lighted room that opened on to the parterre. The painted glass windows were flung wide open: some little merry-souled birds confined in cages were singing away as though they had never heard of such a thing as war. Bayard examined their cages; they were well garnished and supplied, and there was a manuscript duly illuminated on the table, the ink on which was not yet dry; but vainly Bayard sought through the gardens and through the house for the ministering spirit of whose recent presence all these traces remained. She had doubtless possessed herself of Angelica's ring; so at last he was fain to join his friends and concert his plans with them.

Bayard had with him an old soldier called Monart, an honest man and a consummate warrior. He was



stationed as a sentinel in the dove-cot, and was directed to keep a hawk's eye upon the road. In about two hours they could plainly hear a confused noise as of the trampling of horses' feet, which filled them all with joy, for they were staunch men and true.

Monart soon recognised, Malvezzo with about a hundred armed followers, and two hundred Albanians, all well mounted, and looking like men who would rather fight than talk about it. When they had passed the palazzo about the length of an arrow's flight, Monart came down and rejoiced the hearts of his jolly comrades with the news. Then Bayard ordered every man to saddle his horse, for they had brought no grooms with them, and he said, "My friends, such a glorious adventure as this has not fallen in our way these ten years. They are two to one against us ; but what of that ?—let us march !"

"Let us march—let us march !" they all cried out, so the gates were opened and off they trotted.

As Bayard, on his noble charger, passed through the gate-way, a window in one of the turrets opened, a white scarf was waved forth, and the word "Victory," pronounced in a clear joyous voice was heard, the which greatly inspirited them all. The trumpet rung forth from among the little band. The Venetians, greatly surprised, stayed their progress, to see if the blast proceeded from any of their own friends about to join them ; but their surprise was changed into something very like a panic fear, when they perceived themselves enclosed between the enemy's camp on one hand, and Bayard with his little band of

"brave devils, who feared nought," on the other. To be sure, it was very much like being in a vessel that has caught fire;—one wearies of Scylla and Charibdis.

Malvezzo encouraged, on his part, the Venetians, by assuring them of the encouraging truth that they must either conquer or die: he pointed out the wide ditches on each side of the road which it would be perfectly impossible to jump over; he concluded his harangue by sounding the trumpet, to which the French answered; and, crying on one side, "France! France!" on the other, "St. Mark! St. Mark!" the battle commenced.

The first meeting was terrific; Captain Bonnet fought with both hands, and was successful on each side. The Albanese withdrew, and tried to slip round behind the French; but Bayard perceived them, and said to La Crote Daillon, "Look well to those stragglers, I will engage the main body." La Crote obeyed the suggestion, and when the Albanese thought to fall upon the French, they were so cordially received, that a dozen were stretched on the ground in a second, and the rest took to their heels and away they ran. La Crote did not think it worth his while to pursue them; he turned about to help his comrades, but already the battle was fought and the victory won. Malvezzo, with twenty or thirty of his best-mounted followers, leaped the ditch, and returned whence they came. The French did not pursue them, for the Venetians were well mounted and exercised their superfluous courage in spurring their horses most perseveringly. Bayard's brave com-

rades returned towards their camp with a greater number of prisoners than there were men to conduct them, for they had disarmed at least a hundred and seventy, and made them march on in the midst. At the moment of their arrival, the Emperor was walking, surrounded by his courtiers;—he saw afar off a great cloud of dust, and sent a young officer to see what occasioned it. This young man soon returned and related to him the whole affair, saying, that it was Bayard, La Cropte, and La Clayète returning from the performance of the finest exploit which had been witnessed for a thousand years, and with a train of prisoners more numerous than themselves.

The emperor could not contain his joy: he wearied himself in congratulations and compliments, and to Bayard he said, “Happy is the king, my brother, in possessing such a servant as yourself; if I had a dozen such, I would conquer the world; Alexander should have been a baby to me!”

All this was, however, but the prelude to the siege which the emperor soon determined to carry on in right earnest, and he accordingly addressed a letter to Chabannes, desiring him to hold his men in readiness for the assault.

We are not going to give a history of this memorable siege. Alas! such tales but too much resemble each other: we will only notice one little incident, which is curious as an illustration of the times. The secretary wrote the letter, and carried it forthwith. Chabannes convoked an assembly of the French officers; the report already was abroad that the assault should commence that day, and as a preliminary



step, every one began immediately to confess himself, and to confide his purse to his confessor ; and the historian shrewdly remarks, that doubtless the priests would have been easily consoled, if all the warriors who thus made them their treasurers, had fallen beneath the walls of Padua.

THE CAVE OF LONGARA.

DURING the time that the French, in the reign of Louis XII., were endeavouring to possess themselves of the north of Italy, a circumstance occurred, of which the inhabitants of that part of the country even yet speak with regret and horror. The master of Chaumont, Marshal and Admiral of France, and Governor of Milan, having taken, with the assistance of the Duke of Ferrara and his great cannon, twenty feet long, called, in the slang of that day, the "Great Devil," the good town of Lignago, garrisoned it, and went with his troops to join those of the Emperor Maximilian, the whole party intending to march against the Venetians and reduce them. Maximilian's army had recently received an accession of four hundred men-at-arms, Spaniards and Neapolitans, who were quartered at Verona. The two armies encamped at St. Croix, there to await the arrival of the emperor, who, however, never came.—The inhabitants of the plains, terrified at the vicinity of so many armed men, looked about for a refuge, and found one.

One bright morning, the little village church of Longara was crowded with a gay and gallant train, who were met together to celebrate the nuptials of Luigi Lorrída and Leonore Contara. At the foot of the little eminence on which the church stood, was a spacious platform, on which stone pillars were fixed at regular intervals; and over these pillars the rich

purple vine was trained, and ripe bunches of fruit and broad green leaves formed a draperied canopy, pleasant and refreshing. Beneath this natural awning, long, hospitable tables were spread, and the red wine and plentiful meats covered the board. It was intended that, after the marriage ceremony, all the inhabitants of Longara, rich and poor, should assemble and partake of the noontide meal in friendly fellowship.

"A pretty interruption, this, to our bridal festivities," said Luigi, when, at last, the little church door opened, and he issued forth at the head of the party. "Wait here, my little Leonore; I will return in a moment."

A party of mercenaries were busy at the tables, and were contemplated, by the rightful owners of the good things placed thereon, with feelings widely different from those of Guiderius and Arviragus, when those princely brothers gazed on Imogen, committing a parallel thievery.

"I will not wait here, while you go alone among those fierce armed men," answered Leonore. "My place is by your side, now, Luigi."

Tenderly, yet firmly, Luigi removed the little white hand that rested on his arm, and, whispering softly, "A wife must obey as well as love," he called a young lad to him from among the throng, and bidding him stand by his sister, hastily descended, followed by a few brave spirits, to the scene of stolen revelry. High words ensued; the intruders had recked little of justice or generosity; they had rioted as well as feasted; they had trampled the rich fruit, and had

poured forth the good wine. Seeing, however, that their number did not equal that of the villagers, they thought the least said about their misdeeds the better; so, with a few injurious epithets, rather breathed than spoken, and a promise of speedy return, they decamped. The villagers did not pursue them, for two reasons: in the first place, they were unarmed; in the second, they would have obtained no redress, since these mercenary soldiers carried their wealth in their scabbards; so, very sensibly, they set about considering the best means of averting the consequences of the threatened visit.

Not far from Longara there is a mountain, in which nature has wrought a cavern, more than a mile in length: thither the inhabitants resolved to retire; and all through that long summer day, which they had intended to devote to festivity, they laboured incessantly, removing some part of their valuables, and laying in a small stock of provision. Even Luigi and his little Leonore assisted in the work, although they were of lofty blood, and little used to think of any thing but amusement and happiness. As for Leonore, the novelty of the thing chiefly caught her attention, and she laughed and clapped her hands mirthfully, every time she and Luigi laid down their burden to rest her delicate fingers; for they laboured together. Before night-fall, two thousand individuals were assembled in that mountain hiding-place; and when the mercenaries returned next day, they came to a village of desolation and silence; for the houses, though neither despoiled nor empty, were every one untenanted. In the meantime, the refugees slept

securely in the grotto; for the entrance was so small that it would admit but one man to pass at a time. They had brought some fire-arms with them, and having appointed a sentinel, slept in peace, thinking that no harm could befall them.

The next day the mercenaries ravaged the country round, furious at their disappointment; for, as we before said, the Longarese had carried away with them their red gold and their gems. The soldiers determined not to rest until they should discover the villagers. Their search was successful; they tried to storm the entrance, but their efforts were vain. The noise of an arquebuss, fired by the sentinel, roused Luigi from his slumber: he, as being the most considerable person among the refugees, went to the mouth of the cavern, and entreated the soldiers to go away, and rather seek to possess themselves of the goods yet remaining in the houses of the villagers, than to injure peaceful and unoffending men.

The mercenaries made no other answer than by calling some more of their comrades to their assistance, and the wretches seeing they had indeed no chance of forcing an entrance, thought only of revenge. They heaped up straw and wood and hay before the narrow entrance of the grotto, and set it on fire. In an instant the terrible smoke filled the cavern; and, the air having no other outlet, the people within were smothered, without being touched by the fire. At the first moment, when the refugees saw the preparations which were going on for their death, Luigi caught his young bride by the arm, and said in a ter-

rible voice, "We will not die like dogs! let us go forth, and fall upon their spears;" but some of the peasants, urged to desperation by the fearful death awaiting them, closed around the two, and said, "No, no! since we must perish here, we will all perish together." Luigi's dark eyes glared fiercely, and his hand was on his dagger. Alas! before he had time to draw it forth, the weight on his right arm hung heavier. Leonore was dead or dying,—and then he cared not for himself.

When the smoke had a little dispersed, the mercenaries went in, and scrupled not to despoil fair women and young children of ring and bracelet, and relic and chain. It was a dreadful sight;—one which would have touched any heart not callous to every feeling of humanity. Death had been busy: mothers were found with their arms round their little ones. Love is strong in death, though impotent to save. Sisters, brothers, were lying down side by side, all gently touched as though by the hand of sleep.

When the master of Chaumont, and the other heads of the army, heard of the horrors which had been committed under sanction of their names, their indignation was unbounded; but Bayard especially, a sworn enemy to all such exploits, vowed neither to eat, sleep, rest, nor—what was infinitely more difficult for him to forego—to fight, until he had laid hands on some of the miscreants. Two of them fell into his power, and he had them hanged in his presence before the grotto. When Bayard and his noble companions went within, they were melted to tears; for, as I said before, it

was a piteous spectacle that met their eyes. One young child, an orphan, the pet of the whole village, —but who on that dreadful day, when every one had room in their hearts only for the nearest and dearest, could find no protecting arm to shelter her,—had brought with her a favourite goat ; and there the fair child reposed, her arm around the dead creature's neck, and her pale cheek nestled in the animal's long shaggy hair. Bayard turned away weeping from the sight ; he was forced to go into the open air ; some of his brave men had just despatched the two miscreants in front of the cavern ; their attention was all directed that way, when a pale phantom-like creature rushed from within, and knelt at Bayard's feet for mercy. The creature was a boy more dead than alive ; and he was the brother of Leonore. He said that when he first perceived the entrance of the thick smoke, he had fled to the farthest extremity of the recess, where he had observed a slight fissure in the rock, which admitted a tiny gush of air : this had saved his life. He added that he had implored Leonore to come with him ; but she had resolutely refused to leave her husband's side. This young lad entered the service of the French king ; and as to the troops themselves, they would do nothing until they had buried the bodies of the unfortunate victims. A mournful ceremony it was ; and many of the soldiers gave up that day's pay to purchase a mass for the souls of the departed. Luigi and Leonore were found clasped tenderly in each other's arms ; and one hand of the fair girl was stretched over a little ebony cross which she had raised to the pale lip of her beloved one. They were

buried in the same grave, although they were laid in it by stranger hands ; and although all the poor victims of the cavern of Longara were lamented, the bitterest tears fell for the untimely fate of Luigi and his bride.

THE LADY OF MIRANDOLA.

IN the year 1511, the Pope Julius the Second, pretending that the duchy of Ferrara belonged to the Pontificate, attempted to wrest it from its lawful sovereign. He raised an army in the Bolognese; and in order to pass into the duchy, he came first to a little village called St. Felix, between Concordia and Mirandola. The duke on his side, and the French who were with him, encamped at a spot called l'Hospitalet, between two arms of the Po, about twelve miles from Ferrara, and there they threw over a bridge of boats, well guarded, from whence they made frequent sallies.

It happened one evening, that a lady and a sun-burnt cavalier sat together in a lofty apartment overlooking a fair stone terrace, that belonged to the castle of Mirandola. They had met that day, after a long, long parting, and the lady having drawn her couch to the open window, that she might enjoy the evening breeze, and the gentleman having satisfied his keen traveller's appetite, began each of them to grow rather sentimental, and to revert to the long past scenes of childhood, as we are wont to revert to them when immersed in the fevered dreams of middle life. With quivering lips and moistened eyes, they talked first of their childish days :—how they had chased to-

gether the first blue butterflies, and hunted for fairy gifts in the earliest spring violets;—how the lady, agile as a wood-nymph, had loved to climb steep rock and hanging precipice, and to set up a mimic cry of terror, on purpose to incite her young cousin to follow her;—and how the gentleman, loving the little deceiver too much to be very indignant at the deceit, would infallibly claim his own reward for his prowess, when he returned from the rescue. Then they came to the stormier days of youth—and there was a long pause, for of all sweet memories the memory of early love was the sweetest.

“Ippolita,” at last said the count, “I little thought, when planting that young moss-rose, which flourishes so luxuriantly in its rich china vase, that I was cherishing the plant which should furnish forth your bridal wreath!” There was a slight shade of reproach in the cavalier’s tone, but the lady made no observation; so he continued: “Why did you bring it here, Ippolita?—it has no business to bloom in the castle of Mirandola. Why have you preserved it through all these long years?”

The lady paused a moment, and then replied: “I brought it hither because it was the only one of my youthful treasures that I cared for; and I watch over its preservation for a true womanly reason, because it requires so much care. Do you know,” she continued with a look of blushing consciousness, which tried to say, do not think I keep the gift for the sake of the giver,—“do you know it is almost impossible to keep moss-roses alive in this country: I do not think there is any other save mine in Lombardy.” For a while after this speech,

Ippolita's eloquence failed her. At last she said, "Do you remember that happy day, when you came back from your first battle, and found the little neglected, uncared for, almost unacknowledged child, whom you had so often petted and soothed, grown almost to womanhood, and ashamed—the ingrate!—even to welcome you?"

"And do you remember," said count Alessandro, "that evening—that last evening, in the old pine wood? Let me look on this bracelet again. Do you remember how I raved, and stormed, and insisted on seeing the interior of the medallion, thinking foolishly it was the likeness of Count Louis? And you, Ippolita, looking bitterly scornful, bade me at last look on it, if I would, and never come into your presence again! You wear the bracelet still, I see."

"Nay, cousin, I wear it but as a penance."

Alessandro affected not to hear this remark, and continued:

"Ah! Ippolita, there was too much of woman's wilfulness in that."

"Nay, my cousin; and what will you call that wilfulness which *would* not rely upon the plighted word,—which persisted, in defiance of the penalty, to demand ocular demonstration?"

"Well, Ippolita, there was much of error on both sides, and I at least have suffered years of anguish, in consequence of it. You owe me some reparation. Come, Ippolita, let us forget the past, and give me one of those home-flowers in token of forgiveness."

"Nay, not that one, with scarcely one streak of red peeping through its mossy leafing,—that were fit gift only for the acquaintance of a day."

The lady did not remove her hand from the bud she had herself chosen; she remembered not only the planting of the rose-tree, but also she remembered a conversation held at the time, wherein Alessandro had explained to her some parts of a certain eastern language—the language of flowers; so, although her hand was on the bud, she did not pluck it, but said with a smile, “Nay, Alessandro, if you have suffered, so have I. You must do something else, ere you aspire to reward; you must rescue my castle from the siege, or myself from the besiegers. Some notable service must be performed ere I can allow you to become my cavalier.”

“Well, then,” replied the count, stepping out on the terrace; “pray Heaven this trampling of steeds and noise, as of distant thunder, may not betoken peril to your fair castle or to your fairer self.”

The lady raised her hand to shield her eyes from the beams of the evening sun. Presently they distinguished white plumes and shining arms gleaming through the clouds of dust; a few more minutes, and one detached himself from the rest of the party, and riding briskly forward, craved an audience of the lady of Mirandola. Ippolita put her arm within that of her cousin, and returned to the saloon; she threw her rich veil of Cyprus lawn over her shining curls, and drawing up her slight figure to its full height, stood in calm dignity awaiting the entrance of the envoy. She waited not long.

With many words of mock humility, and gestures of mock respect, the messenger informed her that he came from the pope, who, proceeding to the conquest of Ferrara, required the shelter of her castle for his

troops, and commanded her, as an obedient daughter of holy mother church, to surrender it into his good keeping instantly and for ever.

The countess did not immediately answer this impudent demand; she drew herself up in a silent rage, while the rich blood mantled over cheek and brow, and her dark eyes flashed, till even the mailed warrior cowered and trembled beneath the glance.

"Now, on my truth, cousin," she said at last calmly to Alessandro, "we shall be at a loss for words sufficiently courteous wherewith to express our grateful acquiescence in this most humble request. Go to your master," she continued, turning to the messenger, and resuming her wonted dignity, "tell him that God, by withdrawing to himself my husband, Count Louis, of blessed memory, has rendered me lady and mistress of this fair domain, and that I will perish ere a stick or a stone upon it shall be wrested from me, even by the venerable hands of his holiness himself."

"Truly," said the count, "it seems that this good Father Julius is sent here expressly for my accommodation, to give me an opportunity of rendering the service you required. Trust me, my cousin, my words were no vain boasting; I will defend you and your good castle even to the laying down of life. Do you believe me, lady?"

The eyes that had so lately flashed indignant fire, were now full of tears, as Ippolita answered: "The truth that has been tried by years, must not be doubted now: I do believe you, and accept your willing service in the same spirit with which it is

offered. Let us concert how we may best proceed."

The count instantly sat down, and penned despatches to the Duke of Ferrara, Alfonso the First, and to the French generals at l'Hospitalet, requesting troops and arms. The preservation of Mirandola interested Alfonso too much for him to refuse this request; he picked out a hundred brave warriors, and with them went as volunteers two French gentlemen, the Sieurs de Montcheun and de Chante-merle. At their departure from l'Hospitalet, the good knight, without fear and without reproach, besought them to signalize themselves, and to combat valiantly for the lady's service: he escorted them himself to the gates of the town.

In the meantime, Pope Julius swore by St. Peter and St. Paul, that since the haughty countess would not surrender willingly, he would take her town and castle by force, and instantly ordered his nephew, the Duke d'Urbino, to prepare himself to besiege Mirandola on the morrow.

The morrow came, and ere the evening drew on, the besieged, though not more terrified at the pope's artillery than they had been at his threats, were yet sorely grieved, for the gallant Count Alessandro was wounded.

He was wounded, and a prisoner on his couch; and although he still continued to give orders, was utterly unable to superintend the execution of them;—too weak, to draw his bow or raise his good sword;—he too, who had been cradled on the battle-field, and who had been lullabied by the roar

of artillery,—who had wooed and won glory as a mistress, and who was now doubly concerned in the victory; but was he therefore unhappy while lying, like a sick and feeble girl, on his cushioned couch? Ah, no! little he recked of combat or victory; for there was a voice, softer than that of the little Indian bird which foretels rain to the parched inhabitants of the east, breathing prayers for his recovery, and hourly inquiring with fond solicitude after his well-being, which filled the echoes of the large vaulted room, wherein he rested, with such sweet melody, that his ear refused to drink in any other sound. There was a soft hand ever busy ministering to his comfort, now arranging the damask curtains, so that not one sunbeam should come in too dazzlingly on his wearied eyes; now sprinkling the floor, and cooling the air with fragrant waters. There was a quick light step moving gently about, whose every faint sound thrilled through the heart of the wounded man, and awoke there sunny visions of love and happiness, and renewed life, which had long, long since ceased to shed radiance about his pathway. She was free, whom he had so long, so tenderly beloved,—who had loved him too in the golden days of early youth, so well, that she could not endure that he should have dared to doubt, even for one moment, her true faith. She was free; and though exile should await them, this world, which had so long been as a dreary wilderness, would bloom for them again as Paradise, and flowers would spring and cooling fountains would flow forth for them, since they might wander on together.

Let us return awhile to the French camp. Bayard, who had every where spies, that served him truly because he paid them well, knew, by their means, exactly what passed in the camp at St. Felix, where the pope had fixed himself. One of these spies brought him word, that on the day after the morrow, the holy father himself was about to march to assist in the siege of Mirandola. The good knight was so delighted with this news, that he was ready to embrace the messenger. A bold project entered his head. He resolved by a *coup de main* to surprise and carry off the holy father himself, and all his court with him, if he could. He went to Duke Alfonso,—Montoisson, uncle of Montcheun, was present ; and he said, “To-morrow the pope journeys from St. Felix to Mirandola, a distance of six miles. I come to propose to your excellency a project which, if it obtains your gracious sanction, will be the talk of the world a hundred years hence. I am well acquainted with a palace, uninhabited now, on account of the war, about two miles from St. Felix. I will march thither to-night with a hundred picked men, unattended by page or valet. I will hide myself in the palace, and to-morrow morning, when the pope sets off, I promise you to pounce upon him, and bring him here forthwith, dead or alive. I know that his escort will consist only of some cardinals, a few bishops, with, perhaps, a hundred followers. They are not folks to escape out of my hands, and before the alarm shall be given to his camp, I promise you he shall be kneeling at your excellency’s feet. But to support me, it will be necessary that yourself and the Signor de Montoisson should march at dawn, and advance

hence about four or five miles." This project met with the duke's perfect concurrence. Nothing remained but to put it in execution. Bayard made no unnecessary delay; he chose his hundred men, placed them in battle array, as though they had been going to march to action, and taking the spy with them, gained the ambuscade unobserved.

At break of day, the pope mounted his litter, and took the road towards Mirandola. His proto-notaries, secretaries, and other household officers, had marched an hour in advance, to prepare him a lodging. This caring for the creature comforts saved his holiness, but was an unfortunate piece of consideration for our friend Bayard. He met the pioneers, and pounced upon them without waiting to pay the compliments of the morning. Panic-stricken, they turned their horses' heads, and galloped back to give the alarm at St. Felix. This, however, was not all that favoured the pope. Happily for him, when he had made about a hundred paces from St. Felix, a violent fall of snow came on, and the cardinal of Pavia, Julius's prime minister, not having an inclination to face such a calamity, persuaded his master that such snowy weather was really unfit for the pontiff of all Europe to travel in, and that it would be infinitely more safe and dignified to return to their snug quarters, and await a fair day. The pope listened complacently; and scarcely was the cardinal's long oration finished, when they heard the cries of the returning troops, who came galloping on pell-mell, with Bayard at their heels. Down jumped the poor little fat pope out of his litter. Unlike his imperial majesty of Spain, who suffered himself to be

roasted alive, because it was beneath his dignity to touch the poker;—unlike his serene majesty of France, who fiddle-faddled so long about getting into his coach at Varennes, that his pursuers had time to come up and take him;—unmindful of gold stick, or silver stick, or any other stick, the pope, without even waiting for assistance, jumped down, and with his own majestic hands helped to raise the draw-bridge, and poor Bayard, for once in his life, was foiled. He had nothing to do but to retrace his steps. He could easily have taken the castle of St. Felix, but it was scarcely worth the trouble of sending for artillery; and, *en attendant*, assistance might arrive from those of the pope's followers who were now stationed under the walls of Mirandola. Bayard therefore returned to Ferrara, contenting himself with taking as many prisoners in his train as he chose to be at the trouble of carrying off: among them were two bishops, and a certain number of mules. Julius had received so severe a fright, that he shook for four-and-twenty hours, and then took a fever. However, he was able to send a missive to his nephew, D'Urbino, desiring him to join him instantly with four hundred armed men, and to escort him to Mirandola: being resolved, he said, cost what it might, to humble the pride of the haughty countess who had occasioned him so much trouble, a four-and-twenty hours' palpitation, and an attack of fever. So dire was the pope's wrath, that Ferrara itself appeared now to be but a secondary object of his expedition.

In the mean time, Alessandro—how happy he was!—day by day recovering his strength, as he sunned

himself in the eyes of his fair Ippolita. He was able once again to mount his own charger, and overlook the defences, by the time of D'Urbino's arrival. His presence infused new spirit into the hearts of the men, for he was as much beloved for his courtesy as respected for his military talents. On the other hand, the Duke d'Urbino having reinforced the pope, their numbers united were four times as great as those of the besieged, so that it is quite uncertain which party would eventually have conquered, had not a new incident arisen, which effectually put a stop to the proceedings on both sides.

One morning, when the fair countess, sadly wearied of the noise and confusion of a beleaguered town, came to join her brave cousin in the salon, and to ask how they went on, she was surprised to behold terrace, and garden, and street, covered with nature's fairest and most fragile vesture.

"We have been idle *parforce*," said Alessandro, "this last night, my fair cousin, and I know not how long we must now remain so. All our works are stopped; but I for one cannot mourn over our respite. I have been absent too long from you, Ippolita. You look pale and careworn, and — holy saints! my cousin, there has been blood upon your brow."

"Nothing, nothing," answered the lady; "a mere scratch. Yesterday, when I stepped forth on the terrace, a bullet slightly grazed my forehead, and Chiara, I see, has bound it but carelessly."

"But it might have been fatal! and where was I, to have left you alone to front such danger? D'Urbino shall answer for this."

But the lady replied with her wonted generosity

of character: "Nay, Alessandro, do not be unjust. It was no fault of D'Urbino if my woman's curiosity mastered my fear. Let the event be what it will, you must not harm D'Urbino. Remember, you were friends and fellow pages at the king of France's court, and we were all three companions in childhood together. I will have another bandage fixed, and do you, my noble and right worthy cousin, see that the men are properly employed or amused, otherwise they will be tampering with the enemy."

Six days and six nights fell the snow, without intermission, and merrily passed those six days and six nights in the besieged city. If they could not harm the enemy, neither could the enemy harm them. They had an abundance of provisions, and of excellent wine; and deeming it sad pity that any portion of it should run the chance of falling into the hands of the pope and his followers, the rich men of the place threw open their cellars, and let it flow forth abundantly. Then there was such dancing! such carousing! such singing! to keep themselves warm. The countess too, though she could not share their mirth, frequently sanctioned it by her presence, and one glance of her bright eye, and one word spoken in her clear cheerful voice, when she broke in on their little merry meetings, leaning on the arm of her brave defender, would set them all singing and dancing, and laughing with renewed energy. Right well they loved that fair lady, who ever since she first came to reign over them, had had a tear for every sorrow, as well as a smile for every joy, of even the humblest of her dependents. And Alessandro and his cousin, although they could neither sing nor dance, yet enjoyed intensely their own deep and

quiet happiness. They sat by the blazing pine-wood fire, and while Ippolita hung over her embroidery, Alessandro sung the old ballads he had been wont to sing in by-gone years ; then the needle would fall from the lady's hand, and the lute would drop unheeded on the floor ; for a word—it might be but a tone,—had brought the past so vividly before them, that Ippolita forgot her rash and fatal marriage, her husband's early death, her years of solitary sovereignty, vassals and castle, and feudal grandeur. Alessandro forgot battle and siege, and banquet-hall, his years of fruitless regret, and the mournful weight which had pressed so long and so heavily upon his heart ; and the stately Countess of Mirandola, and the warrior crowned with many laurels, became again Ippolita and Alessandro, happy in their hopes of the untried future ; thoughtless in their visions of undimmed fancy ; frank, affectionate, guileless ; wandering together over heathy hill ; reposing together by the running stream ; watching together for the first bright evening star ; and wreathing together the fairest flowers of this faded and sin-touched world—the flowers of childhood, and the flowers of spring.

At last the besieged were forced to confine themselves to the upper apartments of their houses ; the snow was in many places six feet in depth ; to it succeeded a hard frost ; there was ice in the ditches round Mirandola, of two feet thickness ; even the bullets could not impress or break it.

The Pope's artillery effected two wide breaches ; so that the lady and her councillor were obliged to think of capitulation. They knew that the *Sieur de Chaumont* was at Reggio, with the rest of the French

army, fortifying it, in the full expectation that Julius, after reducing Mirandola, would carry thither his arms. Julius too, had an accession of strength : some Spanish and some Venetian troops joined him ; so the Lady Mirandola, yielding to the elements, rather than to the enemy, proposed to surrender, on condition, that the garrison and the inhabitants should pass forth uninjured. Julius, anxious for revenge, would not at first consent to this ; but D'Urbino mediated, and arranged the affair to the satisfaction of all parties. He remembered kindly his fellow page and his laughing little companion, Ippolita ; so he pleaded powerfully with his uncle, and won him over to his wish. The holy father would not condescend to enter Mirandola by the gates, but caused a bridge to be thrown over the opening in the walls, and entered triumphantly through the breach.

On that same day, the lady and her champion sat together, as they thought, for the last time in the room wherein they had at first met. The countess, whose spirit had all along been unwilling to admit the possibility of defeat, gave way to a natural feminine weakness at last, and the count sought to rally her by alternate remonstrance and playful reproach. "No," she said, weeping bitterly, "my tears are not coward tears ; leave me here to my fate. I fear not man ; with man I could struggle still and combat ; I bow to the viewless destiny, which has been about me with destroying influence from childhood. My father's name stands high in the world's esteem, yet have I ever lived the orphan's weary life. You, Alessandro, have never known defeat, until now you come to my assistance ; and I, have I not been pining here for

years in my solitary state, and now, at the very moment when wealth and power would be valuable, my possessions are wrested from me? Leave me to my fate!"

The brave soldier, although he would rather have stormed a fortress, or even have opposed the pope's entrance, single handed, than encounter a lady's tears, or spend his time in useless entreaty, was little inclined to obey her; at least, he hit upon the one cogent argument, worth all reasoning, "That were," he said, "to yield Julius too much satisfaction. By all the saints! he would exult indeed in witnessing these tears."

"That shall he never," answered the lady; and she arose indignantly, and drew up her graceful head, while she dashed away the last rebellious drop. "He shall witness no tear of mine! Let us go, Alessandro."

But the count lingered; he drew her towards the china vase, and again demanded the boon of one rose-bud, as a pledge, a token. Ippolita said, "No, not now, Alessandro: it is not that you deserve it not, but I refused you the token flower when I was rich and powerful, the mistress of these fair lands; and I will not give it you now,—now that I am driven forth a penniless exile: that were a poor reward for your generous service. Alessandro, I will never be your bride, until I can bring you this fair castle as my dowry."

Ippolita kept her word, for hers was a proud spirit. She permitted her cousin to escort her to a quiet convent, which she had in childhood inhabited for a short

time, and there she remained in perfect seclusion, while he went on his career of glory.

At last a change came over the fortunes of their love. Again the castle of Mirandola was a scene of festivity; it had changed masters, but what then? The vassals of low degree,—ay! and even the guests of lofty degree, could raise the wine cup on high, and quaff it as merrily to the health of Trivulzio, as to that of Julius. And Ippolita stood in her own halls again, and in the sunny hour she redeemed the promise she had plighted, when the storm had gloomed the horizon of her life.

The evening of the day on which Trivulzio reconquered his daughter's possessions, was held as a high festival. The old halls were lighted up, the banquet was spread, light steps danced over the marble floors, and the music of merry laughter echoed joyfully through the dim corridors.

But apart from the gay revellers, stood two who mingled neither in the dance or song, but who yet were the happiest inmates of Mirandola that night. At last, when twilight had dispersed her thousand sweet influences in the still air, when the pale form of the crescent moon lighted up the very topmost branches of the old pine wood, which skirted the sleeping landscape, they stepped forth on to the terrace,—that terrace whereon, a year before, they had renewed together their sweet recollections of the by-past; that terrace whence they had first descried the cloud which had dimmed, but had not blighted, the renewed happiness of their life. Again Alessandro's hand was on the moss-rose tree; and this

time Ippolita, permitted him to choose that bud from among its store of fragrant treasures, which pleased his fancy the most, and when he had made his selection, she gathered the flower and gave it to him.

Let us not turn over another leaf of their lives. They are dreaming again, as they dreamed in earliest youth, of love, and constancy, and happiness. Let the storm come, and let the tempest rave ; they are blessed already beyond their fellow mortals, inasmuch as they sleep again, though it be but in fancied security.



EVENING THE FIFTH.

She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from ocean,
Rising with her tiara of proud towers,
At airy distance with majestic motion,
A ruler of the waters and their powers,
And such she was.

But unto us she hath a spell beyond
Her name in story, and her long array
Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond
Above the dogeless city's vanished sway ;
Ours is a trophy which will not decay
With the Rialto.

BYRON.

INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

Venice.

AT last, Minna, I have the pleasure of dating a letter from this place, and feel, as did, I think, Madame de Staël, *toute glorieuse*. When told that in a few hours I should see Venice, I could scarcely help asking myself, if I was indeed myself. There is a charm in the very word, for it breathes of lovely

forms consecrated in song and in romance; and yet more, it brings back to us vividly the memory of those happy days when we first learned to love reading, and could sit buried in some snug corner "from morn till dewy eve," utterly regardless of visiting, and dressing, and dinnering, and all the minor ceremonies of life, while immersed in the fate of Antonio or Desdemona, of Faliero, or of the Foscari.

I thought, while approaching the fair city, of the long past days, when I used to find the word Venice on a map, and think of it as of a fairy place, a far-off wonder, a creation of poets and painters, which I might read of and muse upon, but never hope to visit. And now this happiness, long desired and hardly won, is mine,—but it is happiness. Ask those whose rare fate it is to realize the dream of their young imaginings, and they will all give the same answer. And what may be the reason of this? It is that woman carries not into her after-days the heart of childhood. The smile that is to-morrow bright as to-day, the brow unclouded by regret for the past, or fear for the future, belong to that happy season, and fade, alas! with it.

Woman no sooner enters the world, than she learns to feel; and she no sooner learns to feel, than she learns to suffer. She cannot look on a cloudless sky or lovely scene, but dim and undefined aspirations arise, and vain longings after some kindred spirit who shall sympathize with and share in her deep admiration. She cannot fully enjoy the present moment, whatever materials of bliss may fill it; she cannot possess her spirit in quiet, for she dwells less amid external objects than in the busy world of her

own heart, and there, like the inhabitant of a beleaguered city, she knoweth no repose.

At last, perhaps, she meets with an idol for the shrine she fain would consecrate, and her first offerings are all those sources of innocent delight which have hitherto occupied her joyous days; but she cheerfully lays them down; nay, if it were required, she would give up life itself, for her life is bound up in that of another. Vain folly!—as if truth and constancy were blossoms for earth,—as if death, with his shadowy wing, did not hover over every blessing, ready to snatch it away when most intensely we feel its worth! But who cares to profit by the experience of others? There are lessons which, however wearisome, however bitter, we must learn for ourselves; and too often, even when we have passed the dark stream of mortal passion, when, weary and worn, we have gained the opposite shore,—too often, even then, we hang our harps upon the willows, and sit down, mournful and lonely to wail with lingering regret over the past, to sigh over the illusions which spread their own bright hue over our early days,—to sigh, because those illusions can return to cheat and charm no more.

“Will you buy some flowers, Signorina,” said a young peasant coming down to the water’s edge, as our boat stopped for a few minutes at Fusina. She was a pretty dark-eyed girl; her profusion of black hair was fastened up in one large plait, like a piece of matting at the back of her head, and ornamented with a silver bodkin and a few roses. “Do buy this wreath,” she continued to Violet; “it is fit for a bride!” She held out, as she spoke, a garland of

the delicate mountain cistus. The buds of purest white embedded in pale green leaves, seemed to justify her assertion.

"Why so?" asked Violet, laughingly,—"because they will fade so soon?"

"Not so," answered the girl, with quick wit, "Not so, Signorina. It is rather because these flowers only bud in this cold Lombardy : they blossom in a fairer climate." And with a look of deep meaning, she slightly raised her finger to the sky. There was a world of philosophy in these few words.

"Poveretta," said a man who stood by, "è pazza—è morto suo marito il giorno delle nozze."

The way to the city is marked by piles of wood set in the water. Harry asked the gondolier to chaunt some of Tasso's verses ; but the man said, with a smile and shake of the head, that the custom was a good custom, but that it had passed away ; so May, to please her cousin, took up her guitar, and although she would not murder the poetry of the immortal bard, began the pretty and truly national air, "Oh pescator dell'onde." Thus we made, you may perceive, our entry properly ; but long before the song was finished, the guitar, and the Pescator, and the cheerful party in the gondola, were as though they were not for me ; for domes and spires, and statue-crowned pinnacles, afar off, like dim shadows in the thin blue air, reminded me of that truest of all sweet visions, the fairy Morgana's airy city. Then I tried to remember, that this sea of palaces was indeed founded by a few poor exiled fishermen, and was still dreaming of doges and crusades, when Sir Mark observed : "A pleasant place this enough in carnival

time," and Lady Julian replied, "Yes; Lord A. and Lady Mary were here last spring." Away went the image of doge and crusade:—impossible to think of them and Lady Mary, little Lady Mary, with gigot sleeves and tulle bonnet in the same moment!

On, on! over the broad smooth canal, hedged in to the right and left by palaces, marble palaces, crowned with statues and ornamented with high pointed windows and balconies of stone wrought into every form of arabesque and gothic beauty. We went, pausing now a moment, to peep down through the narrow dark water streets, that opened from the canal, and crept noiselessly between the princely mansions;—then breaking out into exclamations of disgust at the various groups and objects which disfigured the noble marble steps reaching down into the water;—or lamenting the signs of ruin, and poverty, and decay, which hang over the dwellings, where feasted in ancient days the Dandoli, the Pescari, and the Foscari. I will not give you any description of church, palace, or even cathedral, for you may satisfy your curiosity by looking at Canaletti's views.

I will only say, that we found, soon after landing, that the same mixture of fallen grandeur, with want of comfort, pervades the interior as well as the exterior of a Venetian dwelling-place. The rooms of our hotel open into a long gallery, ornamented with statues, busts, and a cabinet of exquisite mosaic; the doors are double, and carved with flowers and figures, but never shut closely; the outer one is of mahogany or ebony, the inner one painted deal. Mirrors and paintings there are in abundance, while a bit of dirty baize presents an apology for a carpet.

It is (so the almanack informs us) November; but to the inhabitants of Venice the seasons bring no change. They know nought, alas for them! of the sweet and holy mysteries of spring; to them the book of nature is a sealed book indeed. They never wander in valley green, and by hedge-row wild, to watch the fairest and sweetest of earth's children wake up from their long sleep. To them the words anemone, and snowdrop, and crocus, which are to us familiar as the names of our household gods, convey no emotion of pleasure; they know not the deep joy of listening to the notes of the woodlark, or to the hum of insect voices among the tall waving grass. They repose not in the burning heats of summer under the green arches of a forest glade.

They know nought of the joy of leaning from a casement after a gentle May shower, and inhaling the sweet breath of the wall-flowers and stocks in the tiny garden. For them the nightingale has no voice, and the grasshopper raises his merry note in vain. Therefore, with their statue-crowned palaces and galleries peopled by Titian, I pity them! There are two affections of the soul, which outlive every other, and which, methinks, ever increase in ardour, as other affections blight and decay, and these are the love of nature and the love of God.

In England, sweet England, green bowery England, I remember how often vainly sorrowing for that which would not now cause a tear or a sigh; I went out alone in the daisied meadows, and wandering on under the hawthorn hedge, by the brook side, my heavy grief was comforted. Tracing the narrow foot-path, and looking over a wild luxuriance of clover,

and yellow buttercup, and bright sorrel ; then resting a while under a canopy of snowy blossoms more fragrant than the breath of Araby, listening to the deep call of the thrush, or the rich low song of the nightingale, how was it possible for the cloud to rest on the brow, or the tear in the eye ? How was it possible still to deem that all of life and hope was vested in the veering affection of a fellow mortal ? Gradually, very gradually, but surely, the gloom of discontent would pass away ; and reading the blessed assurance of God's bounty in every leaf and blade and bud, with which he has robed the fair world in beauty, how was it possible to feel otherwise, than certain, that his mercy also is over all his works, and that the griefs which darken over youth's pathway, are but sent as rough-faced messengers to call the heart, in its first flush of warm and generous feeling, unto Himself, as the alone object worthy of its pure, its disinterested worship.

Ah ! for the mourner who lives on memory, society may be good, but solitude is better. We early learn to look through words and smiles, to read motives ; and when we find that they whom we have been accustomed to esteem and approve, have been esteemed and approved only because we were too inexperienced to pierce the veil, how sorrowful is the knowledge ! how we sicken at the idea of forming new friendships, new attachments,—at the idle task of rearing new palaces, of sweet hopes and tender wishes, which the first blast will overthrow ! Then we turn again to nature, beautiful nature, and there we heed not the storm, because sunshine follows ; and we

mourn not over withered flowers, because others will replace them.

We have had the good fortune of witnessing a festival which takes place once only in a century. It is to commemorate the passing away of the plague at the intercession of the Virgin. This plague ravaged the city in 1630.

On the spot, at which the image of the Virgin carried in procession round the city stopped, at the moment the plague stayed its fury, a splendid church was raised, dedicated to S. Maria della Salute. The city has been absolutely alive with mirth and beauty, and music; a bridge of boats is thrown over to the church; it is crowded continually with well dressed persons; the steps leading from the water up to the church door are strewn and garlanded with flowers; the air is alive with music and laughter; it is a national holiday, and gives us a slight idea of what Venice was in the days of her glory, when her merchants were princes, and she sat like a throned queen on the waters. Some such an appearance as this she must have worn when blind old Dandolo went forth with the crusaders to the conquest of Constantinople; when Barbaro and his hundred noble Brescians visited her on account of the marriage of the doge's son, a Foscari, with the fair heiress of Contarini, and a bridge was thrown from the church of St. Samuel to the shores of St. Barnabas, that the nuptial train might go on horseback to fetch the bride;—when the emperor Frederic, and his young empress Eleonora, visited Venice, on their way from Rome, where he had been crowned, and the royal guests mingled in the dance, and rich

gifts were exchanged between the Senate and the strangers. These were indeed noble merchants, who gave to an empress a crown of gold set with gems.

When we were tired of listening to the noisy mirth, and drew in a friendly circle round the fire, St. Roy read to us a description from Sansovino of an ancient Venetian festival, by which we could see that little change in their ideas of enjoyment had been effected by time. In the year 1557, the Doge Lorenzo Priuli married Zilia Dandola. The streets were hung with tapestry, and decorated with triumphal arches, as they are now. When the bride reached St. Mark's, volleys of artillery poured forth, from every one of the hundred isles, and were horrible to the ear. The clamour of the thousands, who forced their way into the cathedral, was so deafening, that not one word of the speeches of the day could be heard; and in the state apartments of the ducal palace, each of the trades offered to her a splendid collation; but she, poor young creature! answered, "*Siate ben trovati, et gran mercè, ove non fa bisogno, perchè ci sentiamo alquanto stanca.*" She might well be tired! Then came fireworks, supper, ball, and bull-baiting. The good Venetians, to be sure, had some excuse for these extraordinary festivities; a century had elapsed since they had seen a Dogaressa in their Bucentaur.

Sometimes we spend an hour at the theatre, and instead of "the carriage is ready," it is, "the gondola waits." But the pleasantest part of the evening is the return home in these same luxurious gondolas. Far away to the right and left of the great canal long rows of lights rise in tiers irregularly, and are reflected in the waters; not a sound is to be heard save

the regular splashing of the oar. Harry likens it to passing along an illuminated city of the dead.

Musica is in especial extacies every day and all day long. She, poor child, begins to rave about home; for she too comes of an amphibious race, half mariners, half merchants; and Venice seems to her only Hydra on a larger scale. One evening, as we were returning from our tiny walk at dark, some poor old men were kneeling on the damp stones before a shrine at the foot of one of the bridges which connect the narrow streets. The shrine was consecrated to the service of sailors. Musica laid on the altar all the squancikers she had, and it was with some difficulty St. Roy prevented her from joining the devotees. I can understand this feeling of hers in a strange land: she sighed to kneel at the same altar whereat her kindred worship.

One rainy day we were confined to the house the whole morning, and as our time is somewhat limited, the gentlemen went sight-seeing, leaving us to amuse ourselves as well as we might. Truly was there no lack of amusement! we took our station in the spacious verandah, and while the children were busy dressing some dolls in Venetian costume, for some cousins at home, May and Violet sketched some of the grotesque figures below; and Frà and I, idly enough, sat alternately watching the noisy and merry groups without, and the happy party within.

The verandah overlooks the Rivage des Esclavons, broad enough and long enough for some business and much fun to be transacted thereon. In one corner was a shed, under which a man,—sheltered also by a huge umbrella, for the awning of his little domicile

was sadly given to admit the rain,—was absorbed, heart and soul, in roasting chesnuts. Near at hand was a tailor seated on the ground tailor-fashion, so hard at work with his tongue and his needle, that the rain fell and he heeded it not. Then came a hawker selling pictures of the Virgin, very beautiful, with fine red roses in her hair, and very cheap: afterwards came Punch, laughter-loving, laughter-exciting Punch! If the “Useful Societies,” and penny publications banish Punch from the rest of Europe, at any rate he will retain a home in Venice; and if the true philosophy of life is to be as happy as we can, I do not see but that Punch is as useful a member of society as many others; for here, at least, you have no choice; you must laugh at his antics. The other figures of this moving and motley scene were groups of long-bearded friars, their brown serge robes fastened by a cord; knots of Austrian soldiers, very fierce; women, some covered with the long black veil, others wearing a pert-looking Welsh hat, all dressed out with bright-coloured shawls and petticoats: then the noises,—gondoliers shouting, women chattering, chesnut-man screaming, passengers remonstrating, while vainly seeking to force their way; and above all, and louder than all, jabbering and squeaking, Mister Punch himself. Oh, it was enough to cure the most inveterate ennui!—I almost expected, that between the noise and the crowd, the little one-arched bridge would fall.

The evening proved fine; we went on the water in time to see the sun set. A Venetian sunset is a sight never to be forgotten. After the sun had dipped, a pale pink hue overspread the sky, and the sea re-

flected it. Afar off, on the very verge of the horizon, one little dome-crowned islet arose, coloured as with a light neutral tint, in the distance; while, in the foreground, a single gondola stood out in bold relief, and the gracefully bent figure of the gondolier just gave life enough to the scene,—one of nature's fairest.

St. Roy had been to the Frari, to see the tombs of the doges, on one of which, he said, were two-and-twenty marble figures, as large as life. Harry tried to tell, until words failed him, of St. Mark's Cathedral,—that strange, fanciful, gloomy, magnificent mixture of all architecture, to which, he says, almost every epithet in language may be applied.

I will not attempt to repeat his description, for words, however eloquent, would not give you half so clear an idea of it as you will receive from one of Prout's sketches: so, instead of essaying to do so, I will repeat to you a curious story relating to the square, illustrative of the people and the times, which we owe to Daru. The enlargement of St. Mark's square required, once upon a time, the demolition of a certain little tumble-down church dedicated to St. Geminien; but the Venetians, not being blessed with a lord mayor and efficient civil authorities, did not dare undertake the work of destruction without special permission from the Holy See. Their ambassador at Rome accordingly made known the wish of his countrymen to his Holiness.

"Mother Church," was the reply of the Pope, "does not sanction the performance of evil; but when it is done, she knows how to pardon."

On this hint the Venetians acted; and a punishment was duly awarded to them, which gave rise to a sin-

gular ceremony. Every year, on St. Geminien's day, the doge, attended by all the civil officers and foreign ambassadors, proceeded in solemn procession towards the spot whereon the church had stood. From the other side of St. Mark's square advanced the curè of the district, attended by a long train of ecclesiastics.

"When," inquired the padre, on meeting, "will it please your Excellency to rebuild my church?"

"Next year," was the doge's answer.

This question and answer were repeated for six hundred years.

You would be surprised, dear Minna, at the gorgeous appearance of some of these palaces. The ceilings in the ducal palace are covered with paintings, by Paul Veronese. The painting is not absolutely on the ceiling, but in separate and massive gilt frames, superbly carved, and often ornamented with marble figures mixed with the gilding, very beautiful, although, as Violet observed, it was impossible to look up without involuntarily raising our hands with an uncomfortable sort of fear, lest one of those same marble figures should fall upon our heads. We did not visit the Pozzi, over the door leading to which is inscribed "*Lasciate ogni speranza voi chi intrate*;" nor the Piombi; but we went into the prisons, in which the miserable victims of an execrable tyranny languished for light and life in vain. We saw the blackened piece of the wall, against which, for a quarter of an hour, a lamp was nightly fixed, while the jailor went his rounds. They pointed out also the spot whither the condemned repaired to suffer death by strangulation; near to it was a low door, which opens on a passage communicating with the church of

St. Giovanni. The prayer for the dead was hastily murmured ; a boat was in waiting ; it rowed silently and quickly away, none knew whither ; there was a splash in the dark waters ; and the bereaved, who sat mourning at home, knew only that their beloved, and brave, and beautiful, would return to that home no more !

I copied the inscriptions on the walls, but lingered longest in that cave, on one side of which was sketched a rude likeness of the princes of the house of Carrara, "the last and murdered lords of Padua." The father, and the two sons, after enduring unheard-of hardships, were severally led forth to execution, and put to death by the same individual. I know not whether Priuli cherished any peculiar animosity against the Carrari ; but surely, the hand must have been nerved either by revenge or hatred, that could deal the death blow to the young Giacomo, the gentle, the fair-haired, who had been in times past his mother's darling, and who prayed, as a last boon, that he might write a few farewell lines to his bride, Belfiore,—to her, who, poor lady ! was more, far more to be pitied, for the long, desolate future that then opened before her, than he who was cut off in the flower of his bright youth.

Minna, if you are heart-sick of this gloomy page, I will tell you what to do. Send for the "Sketches of Venetian History ;" it is one of the most interesting and delightful histories in our language : carry it out with you into the garden ; seat yourself under the holly tree on the lawn, among the tiny parterres, and there you may dream away, delightfully, a summer's day. Read the touching tale of the patient, the courageous, the affectionate Taddea,—the glorious chro-

nicle of old Dandolo's reign,—the eventful history of the brave Carmagnuola,—the as eventful history of the magnanimous Carlo Zeno; and thank God, all the time, that you are born in a free country, where such atrocities as these horrible prisons are unknown,—where not only the debtor, but even the treason-plotter, is not deprived of air and light; for, Minna, these prisons, although thrown open by Napoleon, have not been tenantless since the days of the "Ten;" for in the Piombi, poor Silvio Pellico was confined.

You complain in that I say so little to you of the paintings with which Italy is peopled. If I am silent, it is because this is a subject on which I dare not speak; one to which all the enthusiasm of my soul is given; and as none of my fellow-travellers, excepting Mr. Dormer, understand my feelings on this point, I conclude that it may not be, perhaps, interesting to you. I could dwell in these galleries for weeks,—in the Manfrini palace, for instance: it contains a portrait of Ariosto; a Magdalene, by Carlo Dolce; a Lucrece, by Guido Reni; a dying Iphigenia,—whose pale, fixed countenance, smiling in death, contrasts wonderfully with the passionate despair of her lover, and the silent agony of Agamemnon,—before which one stands entranced, forgetting time.

They are each and all beautiful; and some others there are, interesting, principally from the subject represented:—Pordenone surrounded by his scholars; Petrarch, an ugly old friar; and Laura, a fair-haired prim-looking dame of thirty,—very unlike my pre-conceived idea of "*suo bel viso*." The cicerone laughed at my look of utter dismay, and said, "Bella

è, chi piace Signora"—and then pointed to a fine allegorical painting of Time running away with Love, which, he said, was a pretty lesson for the young and inexperienced, but which Lady Julian declared was a mere libel on true affection, that, in spite of what Italian artists may think on the subject, ever increases with time, and strengthens as every day throws around us another link of every-day services mutually given and returned.

One thing is peculiarly delightful in Italy. It is the deep admiration for the fine arts, cherished by the humblest and poorest of her children. It seems inborn with them. An Italian guide does not hurry you from painting to painting, and chatter an unintelligible jargon which you cannot understand, or show you, as the guide at Fontainebleau showed me, a picture of Pætus, and tell you he was a famous Roman Emperor. No, they linger delightedly themselves, albeit for the thousandth time, before those works which have given back to their bold creators a glow of exquisite glory; they point out every touch that bespeaks the master-hand, and their own eyes light up if you do but admire enough,—silently, if you please; they ask no words, they mark the fixed attention, the look of love, the blush of surprised admiration, and they are satisfied. You may go to their galleries when you will, pay them or not,—command their attendance at any hour,—sketch, copy, do what you will but carry off the originals. If, on the other hand, the visitor gallop from room to room, talk of the weather, put up a glass, and inquire what is the hour, the guide will draw coldly

aside, and merely observe, "A Titian,—a Tintoret,—a Veronese."

I like this feeling, this sympathy, with the master-spirits of beauty and grace; it is universal, and ever has been so in Italy; it was this spirit which impelled the Venetians to exempt Titian and Sansovino from the tax levied on their countrymen; it was this spirit which prompted the robber Filippo Pachione, when he surprised Ariosto, then governor of Graffagnana, in a lonely wood, not only to let him pass on in safety, but to pay him all deference, to take off his hat humbly, and accompany him on his way homewards, repeating as he went passages of Orlando Furioso. It was the same feeling which prompted Charles the Fifth to hold the pencil of Titian, and to ride at his right hand;—that led princes and kings to hold artists among the most honoured guests at their courts, and restrained the hand of the bandit, and even the cupidity of victorious soldiers, from meddling with the painter and the poet.

You have read, of course, Marino Falieri: I have read, I can scarcely tell you with how strange a feeling, the inscription, "*Hic est locus Marini Falethri decapitati pro criminibus*,"—on the black scroll which stands out in mournful relief from among the hundred and twenty portraits of the doges of Venice, which adorn the library of St. Mark.

You may form an idea of the pleasantries of their ducal seat in the ruder days of Venice, when I tell you, that from among the first forty of her sovereigns, twelve were deposed, four were deposed and

deprived of sight, four were massacred, and four, something wiser, perhaps, than their brethren, abdicated. Verily, it must have been a thorny seat.

One fiery old warrior, with flashing eye and high broad forehead, I fancied must have been Candiano the Second, who led the Venetians on to the rescue of the Brides of Venice. We looked with pleasure on the fine features of Lorenzo Celsi, whose father would never uncover his head before him, and who, at once to save his father's feelings and obtain the respect due to his station, imagined the ingenious device of embroidering a cross upon his ducal cap : also on those of Contarini, who himself led on to the siege of Chiozza, and vowed on his sword never to return to Venice, until his enemies surrendered. The others among them, who excited in us the most interest, were Veniero, under whose mild sway Venice was blessed with eighteen years of internal peace and abundance ; and who, like another Brutus, sentenced his son—his only son, to death, for violating public morality. We gazed also on Francesco Foscari, the aged and decrepid man, who walked leaning on his crutch when he came to say farewell to his son for ever, but who yet, strong in resolution, spoke so firmly to the heart-broken exile, that "it might seem it had not been his son, and yet it was his son—his only son :"—and on Andrea Gritti, whose warlike achievements almost surpass belief.

The librarian showed us a "mappe monde," drawn in the year 1460, by a certain Fra Maùra, a curious production, inasmuch as it exhibits the state of geographical knowledge in those days. All of

the then known world is traced on a round plain surface ;—the Cape of Good Hope is there. Although the passage thither by sea was not then known, some enterprising Venetians had penetrated thither by land. It is a curious fact, that when Vasco de Gama reached the Cape he found some Venetians settled there.

In this map the position of countries is reversed ; the British isles being fixed in the south : of course, I was anxious to know how far the good friar's knowledge of the topography of England extended. Londra, Antonae, and Bristo are the only cities whose names he thought it worth while to note down. The sea is, of course, painted deep blue, covered with ships ; towers are drawn on the land, and here and there are a few scrolls, containing written descriptions of the different countries.

Altogether, we spent a most pleasant morning in the library of St. Mark's, and, greatly to Violet's delight, the librarian was the same who was here during Byron's *séjour* in Venice. He related how Byron stood fixed for a long time before that black scroll, probably forming the first rude sketch of his tragedy, in his own mind, and chattered so much about his noble guest, that had any of us been so inclined, we might have formed a volume of his "Reminiscences or Conversations," with the poet, which would doubtless have sold as well as some other "Conversations and Reminiscences."

And now, Minna, I must tell you, that we spent in this land of romance and song, one evening, the most delightful of all, "à l'Anglaise." I can hardly describe to you the nods and glances of delight we

exchanged on first entering the only room we have seen since we have left Dover, furnished after the English fashion. You will say, that it is scarcely worth while to ramble over Europe, to cross the sea, and to scale the Alps, if, after all, the pleasantest sight we meet with, is a little bit of quiet domestic English happiness, which we have at home constantly before us, and which we here drop upon quite by surprise. But, my dear, it is the force of contrast, which makes it so delightful. My opinion is, that the chief good to be derived from travel, is that it makes us more duly appreciate, more highly prize, our own home enjoyments afterwards. Do you remember the little flower that touched Vaillant even to tears of rapture, in the wild deserts of Africa? I am sure that flower was a French flower, and he had trodden it under foot as a worthless weed in his own land. The spacious Turkey carpet,—the warm hearth rug,—a paravent neatly covered with maps and drawings, —a real old English paravent of the seventeenth century, a few family portraits, some embroidered hand-screens, a harp and piano, made the old Venetian saloon look so *comfortable*. Then there was the gothic balcony, full of china roses, the southern sky, and magnificent sea-view, outward beauties, which, it must be confessed, somewhat enhanced the snuggery of the interior.

There was the master, downright and upright, yielding not to the fairest and proudest, one iota of his own opinion, and extending to all the open hand and the hearty welcome. There was the mistress, plain and unaffected, with an aspect of goodness that could not be mistaken; not decked out in blonde

and French curls, but dressed after the fashion of a modest English matron, and endowed withal with a gentle aspect and winning smile, which might comfort even the saddest mourner. After tea, we assembled round the spacious table. The fire burned its very brightest; the young ladies played occasionally, and without solicitation, some fine Italian music. There was a portfolio of Alpine scenery lying open on the table; the lady of the house drew from her capacious basket some needle-work, not embroidery or lace, but plain work,—some articles of clothing she was making for a destitute family; and while her bright needle went busily forward, led the way to such conversation as refines the mind and softens the heart. She spoke of India, and of the efforts made there by different private individuals, whom it had been her lot to encounter, to ameliorate the condition of the natives, by introducing the pure faith of the protestant church. She told us many interesting particulars of China, where, once in her youth she had had the rare good fortune to land; and passed thence to the history of Mrs. Judson, the good and self-denying, with whom she had been acquainted in childhood.

There was a young Venetian lady present, who listened with intense attention to the narrative of Mrs. Judson's efforts and suffering. She could not, for some time, understand how the mere hope of giving light to those in error, and extending the dominion of our Lord upon earth, could nerve the spirit and frame of woman to such endurance. But when she did comprehend the motive, as well as the action,

her fine countenance glowed with delight, and she said with a sigh: "We, too, could do so, if we were but allowed and directed." This young lady is nineteen, and went yesterday to the Continent, for the first time in her life. Horses excited her surprise more than any thing else; she was amazed to find them so like the pictures she had seen.

Among other anomalies here, is this one, that there are hundreds of Venetian women, who have lived on to extreme old age,—so I am told,—without having once set foot on terra firma, although within half an hour's row of the continent; who have never known the luxury of wandering in a garden, of gathering flowers, or even of hearing a dog bark!

It was with a feeling of bitter regret, that I said that most melancholy of all words, "Farewell," to this amiable family, and really almost resolved never to like a passing stranger again. It is so painful to reflect on that word *never*, which bars all future intercourse on earth, with those whom we could so love.

The gondoliers did sing Tasso as we came home, and the glorious moon uprose. There was a peculiar golden light spread over the sky, from the point where it met the broad sea, and the stars, to to my thinking, were brighter than usual; so that I could not but fancy a Venetian moonlight one of the fairest sights of earth; and Harry, who is a devout worshipper of Shakspeare, began, in his peculiarly low, rich voice, to repeat his exquisite moonlight scene from the Merchant of Venice. Words are surely more powerful to paint than colours.

"How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this *wave*.
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears : soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
. . . . Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold."

These words realized a description of the view before us, which no painter, not even Claude Lorraine, could have done.

"Do you not think," said Violet, "it would be a design worthy of some great mind, to embody Shakespeare's scenes and characters, which paint so graphically in so few words? There is not a play but might furnish forth a gallery itself."

But Harry answered: "No. I think the attempt would be futile, for several reasons: because Shakespeare excels chiefly in those fine and minute delineations of character which no artist can render; because he leaves so much to the reader's own imagination, — the very silence of his heroes, more especially of his heroines, often giving us as much insight into their character as their speeches; and because he presses sound into his service more frequently than sight. Scarcely any, if any, of his pictures, graphical as they are, would be complete without those sounds which no painter could embody. Even the scene from which I have just quoted, would not be perfect without the music of the spheres; and Miranda's island would be nothing without the melody that crept over the waters and allayed their fury.

VENETIAN FUNERAL.

Of all melancholy sights that we have seen, since leaving home, none has, I think, struck us so much as a Venetian funeral, which we chanced one morning to see from our favourite balcony. A long procession of friars, bearing, as usual, incense, torches, and banners, came to the water's edge, accompanying the coffin of a deceased nobleman, which was splendidly decorated. They were there met by a small gondola, rowed by one man only, who was dressed in black. The coffin was disrobed of its rich covering, and placed in the gondola ; all the crowd, — torches, banners, incense, friars, and mourners retraced their steps, and the little black gondola rowed slowly away to the sound of faint music. It looked exceedingly like the passage of the soul over the melancholy Styx.

“ And so, this is to be our last evening at Venice !” was the mournful exclamation of more than one of our party, as we assembled for the last evening, in the large old-fashioned salon of the Leone Bianco. Our stay in the city of the waters had been long enough to induce us to unpack sundry articles endeared by long association, which gave the room a very homeish appearance. May's pet work-box, her Indian work-box of carved ivory, which she never uses,

but loves as much as if she were the most notable lady in the land, stood on a small side-table by the fire-place, in a similar nook to the one which it used to occupy in our pleasant sitting-room in Regent's Park. Violet's writing-desk, disencumbered of its travelling dress, had resumed its wonted station on the library table. Harry's portfolio, without which he confesses he is but a lost man, rested tranquilly by its side ; and books, English, French, and Italian, of which we had here taken in a fresh supply, were strewn about in every corner. Even my own dear myrtle, which has travelled all the way with us from England was there ; the rigour of the season was pleaded as an excuse for its admittance, but the fact was that I liked to have it near me—to see it when I looked up from my work or book ; for I cherish that myrtle very fondly for the sake of the giver, and woman-like, must look on what I love, although the sight should sometimes draw forth tears of agony:—so there it stood : the rough basket-work in which, for the convenience of travelling, it was packed, being quite concealed by the large China vase, in which it was, for the time, ensconced, it contributed not a little, in my opinion, to ornament the apartment.

Then the room itself was one, the like of which we had not seen for many a long day : large and lofty enough to suit the most patrician taste, for the Leone Bianco, like most of the Venetian hotels, was formerly the palace of a proud noble, and still, in the size of its rooms, its gilt mouldings and the carved tracery of its balconied windows, shows vestiges of ancient grandeur ; yet did it not look comfortless ; on the contrary, a profusion of dark rich damask drapery,

the old fashioned folding screen which half encircled the bright hearth ; the massive folding doors of ebony, on which the martyrdom of St. Stephen (an enlivening subject by the bye) stood out in bold bas relief; the grand piano drawn into the centre of the room, and covered with songs of every nation under heaven ; the lesser articles of individual taste and comfort, which I before mentioned; and last, though not least, the group of bright happy faces that assembled round the hearth itself, as the merry time of evening drew on, gave to the old salon an appearance of comfort and animation, that was truly delightful. Well might we mournfully exclaim, "And this is our last happy evening at Venice!"

"Yes, indeed, and when shall we meet with such snug quarters again?" observed Sir Mark with a most pathetic shrug. "*Dieu sait!*"

"No more whiling away the evening in the balcony," said Harry, watching the long lines of lights as they seem to spring up from the dark waters, and spread out in every direction, tracing so beautifully the outlines of the city. "No more Byronizing in Byron's very own gondola, talking sentimentals to Byron's own gondolier!" Here the speaker looked round at Violet; but she was so exceedingly intent on finishing the sprig of pomegranate on her work-bag, that she hoped we did not see the deep blush that mantled to her very temples. "No more sonnetizing to the moon, that most legitimate object of a lady's idolatry, seeing that it has many bad qualities of changeableness, coldness, &c., in common with her! No more moralizing over the Bridge of Sighs! Alas the day!"

"No more watching Punch and his drolleries on the Rivage des Esclavons!" sighed Sir Mark.

"No more of dear Mr. Caramel's evening visits," chimed in little Agnes, "with his tray full of candied fruits!"

Really the subject was becoming too mournful; I was trying to find some cause of grief, yet unnamed, when Lady Julian drew forth her reading table, and changed our wailing into sounds of joy. "Our last evening here," she said cheerfully, "shall not be spent in unavailing regrets: let us examine our budget. But where is Emily?"

May and I went to seek her. Truth to tell, May is half afraid to traverse this great ghostly house, as she calls it, alone; whether she fears the dark-eyed cavaliers who frown from every panel of the gallery, or the grim stone lion that keeps guard on the top of the staircase, I am not quite sure. We peeped into the corridor to see if the child was amusing herself there with a *pas seul*,—all was silent—on we went, bravely,—for there were two of us,—passed through the rows of bending statues, slipped by the lion, down the broad steps, till we came to a side door, belonging to the room occupied by the family; and there we stopped, for the sounds of merriment within were so hearty, that I could not resist joining in the chorus, and my companion, with an effort of yet stronger sympathy, pushed open the door, and we beheld a scene which I will attempt to sketch.

Little Carlino, our hostess's young son, was thumping away with all his might at a spinet, old enough to have borne the name of Tubal Cain upon

its front, trying to extract from it a waltz, to which Alphonsine, Madame Danieli's pretty daughter, and Mr. Ferdinand, the clerk of the hotel, or, as he is called in more dignified language, the secretary, were whirling away right merrily. In one corner of the room knelt little Emily before Fra Diavolo, that most obstinate of quadrupeds, vainly soliciting him to become her partner in the dance. The dog stood on his hind legs, hanging his fore paws and his long shaggy ears, with an expression of countenance so utterly and hopelessly despairing, that it would have moved to laughter the grim monarch of the staircase himself, had he been present. Madame Danieli sat opposite them, with her hands on her sides, uttering from time to time, peals loud and long, which, joined to the strum of the spinet and the ludicrously mournful howls of Fra, as they occasionally burst forth, formed a chorus of sweet sounds, such as mortal ears are rarely blessed with.

"Your pardon, young ladies," said our merry hostess, as soon as she was able to speak: "you have caught us in a moment of mirth; it is my birth-day, and my children are celebrating it. The Signorina and the dog came in unexpectedly, and it is they who have thus amused us."

We hastened to assure Madame Danieli that no apology was necessary for indulging in domestic happiness, which we were delighted to witness; and to prove the sincerity of our assertion, I took Carlino's place at the instrument: May caught Emily round the waist; young Carlino, determined not to remain still when all the rest were footing it, prevailed on his mamma to give him her hand; and the dancers, thus

reinforced, kept it up with spirit until I was fain to cry mercy myself. There is a heartiness of enjoyment, a spirit of real love, animating these little festive family meetings, which abundantly make up for refinement and numbers. Truly, our continental neighbours do more really understand the secret of cheerful innocent mirth, than we of the peerless island ourselves. A bottle or two of light wine, any sort of a musical instrument, a few flowers,—real or artificial,—it matters not, will at any time make up for them an evening party. The light hearts and sunny countenances which constitute the charm of a holiday hour, are always ready for use. They do not fuss about shaking all the carpets, and sweeping all the house before the guests may enter. They fret not, albeit, the new gown does not fit, and the new cap does not come home. They do not send a couple of miles to borrow cards, or buy new ones; neither do they trouble themselves to gather parsley and cut sandwiches, or to scold for half an hour, because only eleven chairs can be found wherewith to accommodate thirteen people. But they meet to talk, to laugh, and to sing,—those who can, and those who cannot, are allowed to be silent in peace; they dance, they exchange good wishes, and with warm hearts and laughing eyes, separate to resume cheerfully their duties of the morrow. But all this time I am forgetting our budget, Minna; you must be very indulgent, and open it with the same inclination to be amused and interested as we did.

THE RETURN.

It was a gorgeous scene. Venice, on one of her high festivals, while yet the fair queen of the Adriatic sat enthroned in full splendour, ere a gem had been torn from her coronet, or a single flower on her brow been dimmed by a tear. There was a mixture of rudeness and magnificence; a carelessness of wealth, yet a want of refinement; profusion of gold, and silver, and rich gems, mingled with an absence of all neatness and propriety, sufficiently characteristic of a nation risen with unparalleled rapidity from the dregs of a sea-beat strand, to a throned seat among the states of Europe. Banners waved, and silken pennons streamed; the gilded, often golden, prows darted about in every direction; long folds of embroidered silks, and stuffs of every rich dye hung from the open windows of every house; the Bucen-taur floated proudly on the great canal, and its noble deck groaned under the weight of tables richly spread, and beneath its canopy of golden tissue were assembled the bravest and fairest — young hearts that had entwined to be torn asunder — bright eyes that were met to look their last. The steps of the marble palaces reaching down into the waters were crowded with gallant cavaliers, armed priests, and lovely women; the bells of the hundred churches rung

gloriously out, and mingled with the harsher but more inspiring sounds of martial music ;—the sea was bright, as though it curtained only security ;—the sky blue, as though it loved to look on so fair a spectacle. It *was* a gorgeous scene ; one, the like of which we shall never behold, but of which we may gather up some faint and indistinct imaginings by gazing on the paintings of Claude Lorraine.

It was on the ninth day of October that assembled thousands, from all parts of Christendom, were about to depart on their holy errand from the ports of Venice. The sea was covered with ships, and palanders, and galleys, fifty of which were equipped by old Dandolo "for the love of God." "Before God," exclaims Villehardouin, "a most glorious prospect !" Forty thousand troops were distributed among two hundred transports, and seventy vessels were laden with artillery, stores, and engines of destruction of every kind then known. But the most magnificent and touching object of that day's thousand wonders was the blind old doge himself, Enrico Dandolo, who, aged and feeble, and needing repose, had yet volunteered to lead his own people, to go forth and live and die with them and with the pilgrims.

In a turret chamber of one of the fairest palaces, so high that the mingled sounds of revelry came in faintly through the open window, like the sighing of a troubled dream, sat two, who, although their steps were wont to be the lightest in the dance, and their voices the gayest in the song, could not mingle in the festival that day. These two were the heir of the house of Pescara and his young wife. The cavalier

was duly arrayed in visor and barred helmet, and armed with sword and lance; but the lady wore neither veil, nor bracelet, nor rich gems; she had forgotten to adorn herself that day.

"Enrichetta," said the warrior, "do not weep; I have been in the battle fray abroad, and I have visited the dungeons at home; but I never knew anguish until now,—do not add to it." Enrichetta was kneeling before a low couch,—her face was buried in her hands, and her long hair, uncrisped and unadorned, fell down and swept the carpeted floor.

"I shall return, carina," continued Pescara; "I shall bear about a charmed life; the holy Virgin whom you serve will protect it for your sake, Enrichetta, carissima, when I am gone—" and as he pronounced that bitter word the warrior's stern lip trembled,—“you will pray for me, and you will have another source of comfort. See!”—and he put his arm tenderly round her waist and drew her gently forward to the cradle of their sleeping infant,—he raised the damask counterpane, and then, for the first time, a tear trembled in his dark eye:—"You will watch his first tottering step; you will hear his first half-murmured word; you will teach him his first prayer. Oh! cheer up, my own dear one! you will find many sources of happiness!"

Then for the first time that fair young creature spoke; she clasped her hands and murmured—"Happiness!—alone, alone!" and again the tears burst forth.

There was that in her tone which showed that all farther attempt at consolation would be but mockery; so her husband spoke not another word, but the two

sat down by the infant's cradle and wept bitterly together. They knew not how long, for they took no note of time; they had been sitting in their sad sorrow, when suddenly a blast, long, loud, and continued, rung out from the Bucentaur through every street and canal of Venice. Camillo Pescara sprung from his seat as though his very heart's core had been pierced; he pressed fondly his wife in one long embrace—bent for a moment over his child, and then, without trusting himself to speak another word, left the high chamber in the turret, sprung down from step to step with the speed of a young gazelle, leaped into his gondola, and before the third charge had sounded, was standing with his gallant companions on the deck of the Giant Mondo.

He exchanged but a hurried greeting with Dandolo, and then drew apart to look—while look he might—upon the window. His comrades did not molest him: they said one to another, "Do not let us intrude on Camillo's grief; he wooed his bride with difficulty and through danger; he dared the death-blow ere he won her; and now they have enjoyed but twelve months of happiness, and glory summons him from her side, he does not hesitate to obey the call: but see how much he suffers!" So they left him alone in his anguish.

In the course of another hour, palander, and galley, and ship had swept away through the wide canal; the pennons were furled, the sounds of music and rejoicing were hushed, the bright pageant lessened in the distance, and they who remained behind were weeping all desolate; for every house in that vast city had sent forth its best and bravest to the Holy War.

Enrichetta had stood watching at the high window till watching was utterly vain, and then she turned away and took up her infant and caressed him tenderly, although her tears were falling fast all the while. From that day forward she was seen no more at masque or at ridotto. She knew that wherever she went many dark eyes followed her with admiration; Camillo had loved to see her so admired when he himself was present, but she well knew he would little care to hear her beauty and grace spoken of with praises when he was not there to sanction it with his presence.

Besides, her inclination led her not to mingle with the light of heart and the gay, to join in merry song and dance, when, for aught she knew, Camillo might, at the very moment, be wounded or suffering; so she secluded herself with her child, and rarely went out of her palace walls for any other purpose than that of offering up, morning and evening, in the cathedral of St. Mark, her prayers to the Virgin for the speedy and successful return of her beloved Camillo. Every day the wreaths, which made the little chapel of the Pescari redolent of perfume, were renewed by her own hands; and scarcely a month passed wherein she did not hang about the Virgin's shrine some new and more costly gift in the shape of gem or lamp, or coronal.

In vain her lady-mother importuned her to mingle with the world, or even to go out for necessary air and change of scene. In vain she represented that her cheek was growing pale, and that the lustre of her young beauty would be dimmed by the time Camillo should return; to all the entreaties of mother,

sister, and friend, she would answer gently, but firmly, "I will not leave my little one even for a moment: Camillo will love me as well if my cheek be pale when he returns, as he did when it was bright and blooming on our bridal day." So, at last, they ceased to weary her with their solicitations, and left her to her loneliness.

Time passed on, as he is wont to pass, swiftly enough with the young and happy,—sadly too slow with the expectant and the bereaved.

Four years elapsed before the return of the Crusaders; they came,—their numbers thinned by the chances of war,—by the burning eastern clime, and by disease; but they did return, and another holiday was held; and while the city rung forth hymns of triumph, and St. Mark itself could scarcely contain the rich spoils of Constantinople,—while every house exhibited its share of gold and silver, and tapestry and furs,—while every table groaned under its weight of costly myrrhines, and drinking vessels wrought from single gems, and every Signora displayed exultingly crowns of studded gold, rings, and brooches, which had been worn by imperial brides,—while St. Mark's high altar shone with those peerless carbuncles which scattered darkness by their own brilliance, what mattered it that the Paynim earth and the cold waters had closed over some few brave and fond ones, who had found a home in the "better land." The news of Camillo's death was brought to Enrichetta by one who said he had seen him fall in an attempt to enter one of the Turkish watch-towers.

Enrichetta had so long been desolate and mourn-

ful, that this blow did not fall so very heavily, at last, as might have been expected. She had dwelt alone in almost regal magnificence, or at least companioned but by her babe for a long time. It was but taking hope from her; she had almost been hopeless since the return of the first band of victors. Ever since Camillo's departure, she had welcomed every morn with tears, and with tears had closed her evening orisons,—she could but weep now and pray; with impotent prayers entreat that she too might soon lay down the load of life; but as often as these words passed her lips, her eyes would turn involuntarily to the couch whereon her young son reposed, and she would check the rising murmur, and almost hope to live for the sake of Enrico, because Pescara had loved the boy. She went no longer to the little chapel in St. Mark's. She had so long been used to pray for Camillo's return, that she could not frame her lips to utter any other petition, but she ordered a perpetual mass to be said for the repose of his soul. She had a splendid monument fixed in the chapel, surmounted by a cross, so that his name might go down honoured to all posterity. She nerved her woman's eye to see that all her orders had been well and strictly obeyed, and then she went to the little chapel no more.

Grief is not the transient vapour that the mere worldling describes it to be; neither is it, as the poet calls it, an ever present gloom. The violence of affliction passes, but a long lingering regret,—a shadow, as it were, of sorrow takes up its abode in the sufferer's heart, and never more is he left to dwell with pleasant fancies alone. He may go into the haunts of youth and mirth, and his laugh may be joyous,

and his eye may be bright; but follow the bereaved one home, and you will see, as he lies down to slumber, that his thoughts revert not to the gay group he has just quitted, but to the loving eyes that are closed now for ever—to the smile which will beam for him on earth never again; and the mourner, musing on these memories, forgets to sleep.

In the meantime, Camillo had suffered a harder fate than death on the field of glory.

He had been one of the very first to follow Pietro Alberto in his hazardous leap from the galley, called "The Paradise," which, linked to "The Pilgrim," bore down together upon one of the watch towers erected on the ramparts. Between the palace of Blachernae and the monastery of Euergetes, Camillo fell, but his wounds, unlike those of his brave captain, were not mortal. We need scarcely tell his tale,—it has been told so often; he was carried off by some mercenary Mussulman and sold to a merchant about to depart for Damascus.

This man hoped, either by a little delay, to increase his ransom, or by waiting until he should recover health and strength, to obtain a higher price for him as a slave. These, however, did not return so soon as might have been expected; the merchant, wearied of waiting at Damascus, feared his guest would die, and was glad to embrace the first opportunity that occurred of transferring him to the possession of a wealthy old Turk, who dwelt in a capacious house on one of the hills that overlook the city.

Camillo's health sunk under hardship and anxiety. Fever came,—it was followed by delirium, happily, for then Camillo's suffering was no longer increased

by memory and pining regrets after the soft voice and gentle hand that had been wont to soothe his couch of sickness and unrest. Small care or attention fell to the poor captive's lot; the limbs, which of old were clothed in Tyrian purple, now stretched uneasily on the bare earth; that head, for the decoration of which eastern gems were not thought brilliant enough, was pillowed on his arm alone; and the eye, at whose bidding a hundred vassals were wont to start, now looked cravingly around for a drop of cold water, and looked in vain! Then came dreams of remembered happiness, and even in delirium came soft visions of green meadow-land and bright fountain and cooling fruits; but the waking from such slumbers, to feel burning thirst and heat intolerable, was like a second death.

The first thing to which he was sensible, when he did return to consciousness, was that he had exchanged the dry hard earth for a softer couch,—a couch of fragrant herbs; and when, rather from a haunting memory of the torment he had endured than from actual want, he called for water, his call, though weaker than that of a wailing child, was answered. He looked up, and behold! bending over him, with pitying eyes and long sunny hair, there stood a radiant child. She held a vase of clear water to his parched lip; but he cared no longer to slake his thirst.

“Who are you?” he said.

“My name is Astartè,” answered the girl; “but they called my mother Maria.”

“And how came you here?”

“My mother was a Christian slave,” answered the little maiden; “therefore I love Christians, although

my father bids me love them not. I was playing in the garden, when I heard you moan;—I came into this grotto, and here I found you, dying of fever and thirst; but drink this cool water,—you will be better soon.”

From this time forward, Camillo could not complain of the rigours of captivity; when he recovered health and strength, his only labour was that of working in the pleasure-grounds, and he had a pavilion set apart for his own use. His master’s villa and garden stood on one of the fair luxuriant hills which overlook Damascus,—a view so lovely, says one of our own old travellers, that it is hard to leave a station commanding so fair a landscape; for it exhibits the paradise below as a most delectable place, and yet will hardly suffer you to go away to get to it:—you long to enter the city, yet cannot leave the suburb.

Astartè was the favourite child of the old Emir Amurath, and his love was testified after the usual fashion of Paynim fathers: the cashmere shawl that bound her slender waist was fastened by a diamond; her shahkshoors were of the finest flowered stuffs of Aleppo, and the little mest that covered her foot was of the whitest leather; her kumsan was fashioned of the finest silk gauze, and the full sleeves were looped up with pearls from Ormus. Her influence over her father was unbounded, and she soon caused the Christian slave to be placed at the head of all the labourers in the gardens. These gardens, under Camillo’s superintendence, soon assumed a new aspect. He hoped, with blind policy, by rendering himself agreeable to his employer, to procure, at some future time, his liberty: he had ever been fond of

gardening, and had, in happier days, perfected a little Eden on the banks of the Brenta. Dwelling fondly on that recollection, he endeavoured now to assimilate as much as possible the grounds under his care to those wherein he had wandered and conversed with Enrichetta.

Perhaps it would have been difficult for fastidiousness itself to find a spot in Syria better calculated to farther his design. Animated by hope, still more by that fever of the mind which seeks a vent in incessant bodily labour, he separated the grounds, heretofore one confused labyrinth of vegetables, fruits, and flowers; and confining melons and cucumbers, cotton and tobacco, within due bounds, employed all his taste and skill in decorating the pleasure-grounds: he laid out parterres, and planted groves; he overlooked the labourers; and one spot he reserved to labour in himself. It was at a considerable distance from the house, and unseen from it, by reason of a large plantation of pomegranates and citrons that stood between.

Under the shade of a few lofty trees, palms and cypresses, tufts of wild hyacinths and violets mingled their beauty with the fragrance of the rich roses of Damascus, and of a thousand wild aromatic herbs, peculiar to the country. In the centre of the little platform arose a sparkling fountain, and one side of it opened into an orange grove, at the entrance of which was the cavern in which Astartè had first found him.

From this favoured spot he could overlook the "beautiful city," belted with its shady gardens and woods of every tint, watered by the silver Barrady,

flowing and gliding like a winding thread. In this spot he loved to repose, during the burning heats of noon; the grotto was as his home in the far country; for within its precincts he had first heard the gentle accents of pity and consolation, and those words came not the less gracious to the lonely one because they were uttered by a little child.

Astartè, too, learned to love the little retreat; and she would sometimes please herself by carrying thither sherbet, and the fragrant Damascene cakes formed of conserved flowers; she would arrange them in the grotto, and then hide herself behind the thick foliage at the entrance, to await Camillo's coming.

If he would but look surprised at these traces of unseen ministry,—if he would but search in the grove and thicket, until her own quick, joyous laugh betrayed her hiding-place, the child was happy; and how could he fail to love the little creature, whose prattling voice was the only music of his solitude.

He sought to testify his gratitude to her, who had sweetened his bitter cup by those thousand attentions which the female heart, even in childhood, knows so well how to appreciate. He taxed his utmost ingenuity to execute for her some of the toys of well-remembered Europe. One day, the tiny pinnace, hollowed from a cocoa-nut, garlanded with jasmine blossoms, and freighted with rich spices, should sail over the silver lake; another day, he would skilfully carve for her some marionettes, and make them enact Venetian scenas for her amusement; sometimes he would call forth his magic swans,—swans formed of lotus leaves,—and make them traverse the china vase in any direction that should please the little maiden;

and when she was tired of these sports, she would lie down listlessly by the fountain side, and Camillo would sing to her the *barcarolles* of his own land, or repeat the old legends he had been wont to hear from his nurse: nay, he would even essay, with ivory wand, to trace on the sand the letters of Europe; and though it was a weary task for the young infidel, she did her best to learn them, because her mother had loved the Christian's language.

One day—it was her birth-day—Camillo, who had long been preparing to grace it with some extraordinary gift, displayed to her astonished view, a small silk balloon. Astartè clapped her hands with childish glee, as the fragile fabric ascended, stayed its flight for a few minutes, poised in the clear air, and then gently falling to earth again, alighted on a rose-bush.

“Any thing, any thing you may ask of me, dear, dear Camillo,” she said; “what is the wish of your heart?”

“Liberty,” answered the captive, falling lowly at her feet, and pressing the hem of her embroidered robe to his lip—less in humiliation than in deep gratitude. He was little prepared for the storm that burst forth. She, the timid child, whose voice was softer than the bulbul's whispered song, and whose form was delicate as a fading rose-leaf, trembled now with passion;—pale with suppressed anger, she stamped her fairy foot on the ground, and commanded him, as soon as she could speak, to leave her for ever, and to return to the misery whence she had rescued him: the next instant, she caught his hand, and leaning against an acacia-tree, gave way to a child-like

passion of tears. "Forgive me," at last, she murmured, "forgive me, Camillo: why, why do you wish to go?"

"Go, go," she continued, with another as sudden transition, "but not to your own land,—go to the damp cave and the hard labour, which, but for her whom you wish to leave, had been your portion until now;—go, slave, and let me never see you more:" and, then turning round quickly, she hastened towards the house, leaving Camillo in an agony of disappointment and surprise.

On the next day, however, Astartè re-appeared, and without at all alluding to the yesterday's storm, resumed her former open and affectionate manner. But the poor captive, how fared he? Alas! with fettered will and chained thoughts, what bootied it, that the iron link which bound him to the soil of Damascus, was wreathed with flowers? Dearer to him had been a residence in the narrowest prisons of his own sea-girt city, with a couch of stone and captive's fare,—so only once, but once in the day, he had been blessed with a sight of his beloved Enrichetta and her boy,—than the luxurious pavilion and delicious gardens, in which the kindness of the little Astartè had assigned his dwelling-place. His thoughts, his efforts had all been bent to this one moment of anxious entreaty, and now his last hope was torn away; for he never dared hazard even an allusion to freedom again.

In the meantime, the sigh succeeding the smile,—the eye-lids drooping over the cheek,—the colour changing ever from red to pale, when the breeze murmured, or when a leaf dropped at her feet,

indicated that time was passing on, and with his magic touch, gradually transforming the playful child into the young girl, serious and pensive, and imbued with deeper thoughts and deeper affections, than belonged to birds and flowers. The character of her amusements changed; balloon and fairy-bark were thrown aside, and the ivory wand became the favoured toy: she would learn to write as well as to decipher her mother's language; and she would sing the ballads her mother had sung. One evening, when Camillo had exhausted his store, she offered in her turn to beguile the hour with a fable—an eastern fable. Camillo laid aside his guitar, and Astartè, veiling her glowing cheek with her hand, thus spoke:

“Many, many centuries ago, before the Holy Spirit had given his command to the winged creatures in Eden, to bear forth the seeds of all plants and trees to every extremity of the habitable world, there was a land, a southern land, wherein the vine was not. An Alla looked with an eye of pity on that land; and because its inhabitants sought to serve him devoutly, he ordered an angel, in the deep of the night, to carry thither a shoot of the vine, and the shoot took root and prospered. The vine reared its head aloft, and became for its beauty and fertility as the queen of the vegetable tribe. But, anon, the sultry heats came on, and the tree lowered her stately head, and the weight of her rich fruit weighed her down unto the ground, for there was no support at hand, save only the rough stem of a barren fig-tree, and the fig-tree was accounted the least of all the children of the garden, because it yielded neither flowers nor fruit.

Now, it happened, that the lord of the garden walked forth in the cool of the evening, and he said, 'Let the fading vine and the barren fig-tree be cut down together, for they do but cumber the ground.' Then the vine said, 'Shall I wither and die, and be cast away utterly because there is no tree here worthy to support me? What, if I lay aside my queenly state, and bend even towards this, the least of my subjects!' And the vine bent down her stately head still lower, and she threw her curling tendrils among the branches, and the fig-trees' broad leaves shaded her rich fruit from the scorching heat, and from the south-east blast, and the vine grew in beauty and sweetness, and the fig-tree supported her failing strength, and the Lord of the garden rested under their shadow, and he said, that the union of the lovely plant with the strong tree, was beautiful to look upon."

Astartè finished her tale, but she removed not her hands from her face, neither did she look up, but sat timid and trembling, waiting what Camillo should say, and he too paused some minutes, and when he spoke, he did so in the same strain.

"In that same garden," said he, "whereof you spoke, there grew two date palm-trees, of more than ordinary grace and beauty. Now it happened, that a neighbouring pasha came to visit the lord of the garden; and as the two walked together, the lord desired his guest to choose, from among all his possessions, a gift whereby he might carry away with him the memory of their pleasant intercourse into his own

land. And the pasha chose one of the date palm-trees, for he had never seen the like for beauty and for grace before ; and he took it with him and transplanted it into his own fair gardens : and they buried its root in the earth, and cleared away from its neighbourhood, all weeds and all smaller shrubs, and watered it plenteously with cooling waters ; but yet the palm-tree flourished not,—for it was alone. Its flowers were pale and inodorous, and its fruit ripened not, for it was alone, and in spite of all the care they bestowed upon it, the tree withered and faded, and at last died, because it was a stranger in a strange land.”

There was deep silence long after Camillo had finished speaking. At last, Astartè arose, and folding her white veil close over her fair face, she arose and departed :—she came not again into the gardens.

Day after day passed, and Camillo vainly looked for her light step and lighter laugh ;—for him they were hushed for ever. At last, a messenger one day came to Camillo, and bade him speedily follow him, for he said, “Thou art a Frank, and must needs be well skilled in medicine :—come, for our master's daughter is dying.”

Camillo followed his guide through the long avenue into the home, and towards the haram, which he had never yet approached. He was conducted into the lady's apartments, and there, on a couch covered with rich purple hangings, and drawn close up to the open window, so that every, even the faintest breath of air, might come over her fading countenance, lay Astartè. By her side was the old white-haired Emir.

His attendants were vainly pressing him to eat, for said the old man ; “ If the light of my soul and the treasure of my heart be taken from me, what desire have I to live ?”

Camillo approached, and took the fair creature’s hand, although he knew that her disorder was beyond the reach of medicine : she still spoke not, and betrayed only by her mantling colour, which faded as suddenly, and left her more pale than before, her consciousness of his presence. Then some of the attendants, with dark and lowering brows, murmured, “ Is it likely that the Frank who has bewitched our lady with his enchantments, should cure her ? Let him die if she recover not.” Camillo, who felt that he would even then willingly have laid down his life for the young creature, whom he had loved with a brother’s love so long, answered only by a proud glance, and a slight curl of the lip ; but the fiery old Emir arose, and said, “ By the soul of the prophet, if he hath done this evil, not his head alone, but the heads of a thousand vile Christian slaves shall lie at the feet of my child to-morrow ! Mashallah !” Then Astartè stretched out her arms to the angry old man, and drawing him quietly towards her, whispered a few words which fell like oil upon the waters and calmed his angry feelings.

Day by day Astartè faded, and her form grew thinner, and her pale cheek paler ; and day by day Camillo watched by her couch ; for from his hands alone would she receive either food or medicine. Gentle and quiet, she seldom spoke, and then her words related ever to the comfort or well doing of others.

Her last words to Camillo were to bid him commend her to his Christian wife,—and to her father, an entreaty, nay, a command that he would release Camillo and send him home ransomless. It was a lovely and touching sight to see this Paynim girl, faint in the embraces of death, taught only by that pure law of love to our fellow-creatures, which is implanted in our hearts at our birth, thus utterly regardless of self,—thus anxious for others.

“Promise,” she said, collecting all her energy, to give emphasis to the word, “promise, my father, to do this thing.”

How could the old man refuse her last request?

“And you, Camillo,” she said, “do not go yet,—just yet,—wait until the violets have taken root, and the roses have blossomed under the cypress trees,—where they will put me to rest,—nay, promise, Camillo.” And Camillo took her hand and kissed it fervently, but he could not speak; and she, with a faint colour stealing over her fair brow, fainter than the last delicious glow of sunlight, withdrew her hand, and, drawing her father’s arm around her, she composed herself to rest. Long and anxiously they watched her slumbers, but she awoke not again!

Like a child, wearied even at early morning with earth’s fading flowers and lowering skies, she had fallen asleep before the heat of noon and the burden of the day came on. Days and weeks passed on before the Emir recovered from the deep stupor of his grief, for he had loved that child for her mother’s sake, and for her own innocent cheerfulness, beyond aught of earth; and now his sunbeam was taken from

him when he least expected it, and had left the world a desert. The violets had taken root, and the roses had bloomed and faded, before he bethought him of his promise, and then he sent for Camillo, and told him he had nought to do but to assume the turban and the crescent, to become a follower of Mahomet, and speed away where he listed.

“ Did she speak aught of this ? ” inquired the captive :—he dared not name her name.

“ She was a child, and thought not of such things,” replied the Emir, with more gentleness than was his wont ; for affliction had softened him ; “ but I have more regard for your soul than to let you depart an infidel as you came hither.”

So, Camillo walked proudly forth from the Emir's presence, and returned to his daily labour—his hard labour. He did not, until he had lost her for ever, know how much the presence of the gentle child had availed to soften his harshest tasks. Now, he had none to please, no approving smile to anticipate. Why should he seek repose in the burning heats of noon ? Alas ! no fairy foot, no clear joyous voice would now steal on his slumbers ! Why should he seek his bower at eve ? no hand had been there to adorn it with flowers, to spread the pleasant fruits and cool sherbet ; and the weight of utter loneliness pressed heavily on Camillo's heart. And heavy is that weight. To wake at morn, sickening at the daylight because it disperses dreams,—to wake and revive, by slow degrees, to the haunting consciousness that the long day, happen what will, cannot bring one whom we care for,—to labour on with the cankerworm regret gnawing at our heart,—to behold the

approach of night, and to feel that night brings some loved step to every hearth, but none to ours,—this is the torment of loneliness. Camillo bore it long; but, by slow degrees, he listened to the tempter. What was his life?—a living death!—What was the hereafter to him, dim and shadowy, and uncertain? Was it worth the utter sacrifice of home and love and happiness, of life? In short, after all, could the joy or misery of eternity depend upon what might be a mere mortal prejudice? He was not about to commit murder, to injure any creature; it was but an idle ceremony, a few unmeaning words, and then—Enrichetta!—Venice!—liberty!

“Let the worst come to the worst,” he said, “as he plunged desperately forward, it will be no such dreadful doom to share the heaven wherein Astartè dwells.” And he stood in the presence of his master, and he trod on the holy symbol, which his mother, in her dying agony, had pressed to his infant lips, and spoke the words which cut him out from the visible church below, and he came forth from the presence of the Emir,—Camillo the Apostate!

Long and wearying, and painful, was his journeying by land and by sea, towards the home of his fathers; but there was a shadow on his soul which rendered him insensible to external evils. He had risked all for her; the hot sun, the burning thirst, the aching limbs, the restless night; these were as nothing. The words which could not be re-called, the cross which he had trampled, the faith he had abjured; these were the things which clouded his brow and dimmed his eye, and pressed upon his

spirit, even when he went over the blue Adriatic, and every hour drew him nigher to Enrichetta and his child. It was night when, at last, travel-soiled and dejected, he landed on the marble steps of his own palace. It was radiant with light, and the air was sweet with song; troops of gondolas thronged around the entrance freighted with music and merry masques, for it was the season of carnival; the palace was crowded with guests. Camillo easily gained admittance: his turban and Turkish costume excited no attention; it was deemed his masquerading attire. None recognised him, not even the old porter who had nursed him in infancy; for, although he had been absent but eight years, constant exposure to a Syrian sun, travel, and more than all, anxiety and sorrow, had darkened his complexion and wrinkled his brow. Long and anxiously he sought for her, whom memory traced as still blooming in the first flush of womanhood.

He examined the eyes, the figure, the hair of every lady who approached, he could not satisfy himself; at supper the crowd would unmask, he would wait till then. In the meantime, wearied with nonsense and noise, he would withdraw into a little curtained recess; but he stopped on the threshold, the recess was occupied. A lady was seated on a couch, and a cavalier knelt at her feet: both, seeking a refuge from the excessive heat, had unmasked; and, though the long golden hair sparkled now with precious stones, which he remembered only confined with flowers,—though the form was fuller and rounder, and the eyes had exchanged tenderness for dignity,—though the complexion, once so bright, was somewhat

faded, he knew he could not be mistaken. She spoke; and, though time had touched other things with somewhat of change, not a tone of her voice was altered. Alas, what were the words he listened to! She addressed the cavalier, "Arise, sir, you are mistaken; it is not to the wife of Carmazaro such words should be spoken." The curtain fell from Camillo's hand; he had heard enough that day. He stood, leaning for support,—that strong man who had borne so much,—against a marble pillar; the lights, the dance, the noisy revel, faded away from his confused sight, and he beheld only, in his long mournful reverie, the palm-tree tope, the gushing fountain, the fond and innocent Astartè!

He was, at last, aroused by Enrichetta's voice; she, for whom he had borne so much, so long,—captivity and labour, and anguish unspeakable, and—he trembled to think of that last sacrifice; she, whom but to look on again, he had perilled body and soul, stood now before him, and she knew him not. She was talking and laughing carelessly with a gay group of idlers, and leaning on the arm of Carmazaro,—of her husband,—of him whom Camillo well remembered as his most dreaded rival in by-gone years, when, as yet, he was only a suitor for Enrichetta's hand. He turned hastily away; he would quit the castle, the city, and never look on either again; but, dazzled by the lights, and hurried, he scarcely knew whither, by his extreme agitation, instead of following the gallery that led to the principal staircase, he found himself, after a few hasty strides, in that one which led to the more private apartments. It was well; he would see his infant once again,—his boy, and note

the change that time had wrought on him also. It was in that same turret chamber, wherein they had parted, that he, at last, found the child. Sick and sleepless, Enrico was tossing on a fevered couch, and mistaking his father's gentle step for that of his nurse, he asked eagerly for some drink.

"And do you lie here alone and neglected, poor boy!" said Camillo, "while the castle is full of gay revellers?"

"Alas!" answered the child, "I have been always alone and neglected since my mother brought home a new lord to my father's house, and since she has had other and fairer children than myself."

"And where is your father, my child?"

"Dead," answered the boy; "if he were living, dost think I should be left to perish here alone? *He* loved me, they say."

"But if he were not dead,—if he should return from the Paynim land,—if he should return, with wasted health and ruined strength, poor and broken-hearted, wouldst go with him?"

"Aye, would I, to the world's end; so he would love me."

"Come, then," answered Camillo; "trust yourself with me, and I will take you to your father."

To raise the child from his couch, to wrap him in a warm mantle, and then enfold him carefully within his own, was the work of a moment; and Camillo knew the private staircase that led from the turret, by which he might escape unseen with his precious burden. The attendants were all busy in the gayer part of the palace. Camillo gained his gondola unimpeded; and there, while the boy reclined warmly

wrapped at his feet, he heard from him, how tidings came that he had fallen at the siege, and how Enrichetta had mourned him for awhile, for three, nay for four years, and had, at last given way to the persecuting entreaties of her family, and had exchanged her mourning dress for a bridal veil; he told also how, by degrees, Carmazaro had weaned her from all regret for the lost, and from all love for the living, until her child, her first-born, neglected and forlorn, was scarcely ever admitted to her presence.

Then Camillo revealed himself to the child, and Enrico exclaimed, "Father, father! I hope I may live yet a little while, to feel the sweetness of a father's love." And the father looked on his new-found treasure, and sighed in bitterness of heart, as, gazing on the attenuated form and sunken cheek, and watching the breath, faint and faltering, he felt that he should soon be desolate again.

"Father!" said the child, after a long fixed look, "let me land; I am faint and tired of even this gentle motion."

Camillo opened the curtains of the gondola, and seeing that they were far enough away from the city, near a little ruined islet which had once been as a sort of summer garden belonging to his own palace, he desired the gondoliers to stop, and carried, himself, the sick child ashore. Ruin and desolation marked every step of the spot, which he had loved so well; but he was too much troubled to heed it. Day was breaking faintly, yet the fevered frame of the sick child was not cooled by the gentle sea-breeze. Camillo looked round for shelter, but the little chapel was now roofless and damp; and Enrico said, "Let me lie down

by the fountain's side, dear father, that I may see and hear the cooling waters." Down by the fountain side the child reposed, and when the broad sun arose, and his beams fell hot and direct on the head of the wearied one, the father bent over the boughs of a wild fig-tree, and formed a shade for his fair young head ; and Enrico slept, while his father watched his slumbers. Sometimes a smile flitted over the sleeper's face, and then Camillo was glad, for he knew that there was peace within.

" Father," said the boy, " why did you withdraw your hand ? I should not have awakened, had you not withdrawn your hand from me. Is the sun high in the heavens, father ?"

" It is past noon, Enrico, and you have had a long and refreshing sleep."

" Long, but not refreshing ; for I feel fainter even than I was before. It is a bitter thing, dear father, is it not, to find a treasure and lose it just as we begin to know its value ? You have watched over me, and your hand stretched this shade over me. Oh, how happily you and I could live together, and love each other ; and now we must part, but it is only for awhile !—Father, I have had a lovely dream :—I was in Paradise, and soft music breathed, and beautiful forms were there. My old nurse was wont to say that such dreaming was a sure sign of death. Father, make the sign of the holy cross upon my brow, and kneel down and pray by me, that I may die in peace."

Then Camillo started up horror-stricken ;—then he drank the full bitterness of the cup of sin. He dared not make the holy sign ;—he dared not kneel



to pray by his dying child! All in vain were Enrico's tears,—all in vain his passionate entreaties: still and pale, and statue-like, Camillo leaned with folded arms against the fig-tree. The words he had spoken in the Paynim land rose up terrible witnesses against him: a weight, heavier than the cross he had dared to trample, was on his spirit; he could not name the name of the God whom he had forsaken; he could not implore the mediation of the Redeemer whom he had forsworn.

Suddenly arose a strain of soft wild music, and Enrico, speaking with difficulty, said, "It is the hymn of the nuns of Santa Chiara; they come hither to pray for the soul of the Abbess; bid them hither, my father."

It was a beautiful scene, that scene by the ruined fountain. The nun knelt down by the dying child, and she supported his faint head on her arm, and with her hand she signed the holy sign upon his brow. Even as she did so, a bright sunbeam darted through the broad foliage of the fig-trees, and falling straight upon the boy, showed his young face lit up with holy peace and joy. The gentle nun prayed by him, and her soft accents fell like balm upon the sufferer's heart, and seemed to chase all pain away.

To the words of prayer, succeeded the hymn of praise; for the child slept, and his spirit fled away to the regions where pain and sorrow are unknown;—and the nuns rejoiced to think, that another soul had escaped the temptations of the world; so they raised their hymns of thankfulness.—But was the hour all beauty and repose? Alas, alas! the curse and shame of sin were there.

A little apart, yet not so far but that he might see the calm face which looked so lovely in death, there sat a man, still young in years, but aged, and bowed down with grief, and ever and anon, as the soft hymn wailed by him, he shuddered as though the sounds were too pure and holy to meet his ear. He sat a silent, but not unmoved spectator. He waited till the last of the nuns had departed. He watched through the long damp night. He would not let them take the inanimate form away, but would see it laid to rest in the desolate garden of the lowly chapel himself. When all was over, and he had watched until watching was vain, he sailed away over the blue waters, none knew whither; for Camillo, the apostate, was never seen again in Venice.

NIGHT AT VENICE.

NIGHT! and in the clear pale sky
The crescent moon is riding by,
And the stars, those eyes of Heaven,
Whose sweet light to mortals given,
Calls us from this lower earth
To the bright clime that gave us birth.
How sweet, with every thought at rest,
To gaze upon this faëry scene,
One of earth's loveliest and best,
Where mortal hand is scarcely seen!
A world! a waste of waters! night
Has thrown her veil o'er sea and sky;
And, but for that long line of bright
And moveless mimic stars that lie
Close to the dark wave, we might deem
Life and the living world, a dream;
For, all is silent, save the low
Deep plashing murmur of the wave below.

Sweet, when the day's long toil is over,
In the cool balcony to stand,
And let the heart, a winged rover,
Fly far away to another land,—
To feel the soft night-wind pass on,
With breath as pure and touch as glowing,
As the day-breeze that smiles upon
The daisies in our own land growing.

Ah, me ! comes, never scene more fair,
Or hour more blessed than the rest ;
But, straight does memory wander there,
Where they still dwell, whom we love best.

Thus, too, in this delicious clime,
When Eden breezes fan the air,
We dream upon the coming time,
When, freed from sorrow, sin, and care,
The pardoned shall inhabit there.
We dream—and, lo ! a simple word,—
A flower's sweet breath,—a singing bird,
Calls us, and calls us not in vain,
Back to earth's gloomy sphere again !
The heart's deep sympathies ! how fair,
How tender, and how true they are !
Oh ! what were Paradise itself ?—
A glorious spot, undimm'd by pain,
But not home,—looked we not to meet
Our lov'd and lost ones there again !

Fondly, regretfully, as we part from a long-loved friend, did we say farewell to Venice. We embarked as soon as it was light, being desirous of seeing the vegetable market, which comes in fresh and beautiful with the dawn. Innumerable boats rested on the surface of the waters, divided into compartments, as regularly as though they had been stalls on land.— Here was a regular dairy; butter, milk, eggs, all neatly and nicely arranged: a little farther on, you might fancy yourself in a garden,—fruits and vegetables of every sort, fresh from the fertile plains of Lombardy, were equally inviting to the eye and to the palate. Flowers, be sure, in this land of poetry, were not forgotten; they, too, the pretty aristocrats, had separate squares to themselves, and awnings were carefully spread over them, so that the dew might not be dried on their fair petals too soon. It was a pretty and animated scene. The gondolier stood upright at the far end of the gondola, leaning idly on his oar, while his mistress bargained and chaffered with the salesmen. The bargain was settled, and away shot the boat, threading delicately the intricate paths, and presently rested before another floating shop. The seller, meanwhile, if of the masculine gender, sat bolt upright in the midst of his goods; if feminine, the chances were that with graceful gesticulation and a merry smile, she stood inviting customers to inspect her treasures. There was as much amusing diversity among the purchasers as among the peasants;—some stately dames moved straight to the purchase of the particular article they wanted, and away again;—others again, reclining languidly, moved from one to the other, chaffering now for a bouquet, now for a cauliflower,—more intent on whiling away the time,

than on providing for the family at home; and some few there were who came neither for business nor amusement.—She was so closely veiled, that we could discern no feature excepting the large lustrous black eyes, that looked out anxiously, as their owner, every now and then, drew aside the little curtain of her gondola. In vain her attention was called to cabbages, gathered but half an hour ago at Dola,—to grapes fit for a banquet. On, on the young lady went; but her gondolier, as if by instinct, stopped at last—for a second only; but in that second her hand was hastily caught: a bouquet was thrown into her gondola, and we saw the dark eyes no more peeping through the curtains;—they were, doubtless, better employed. We landed at Fusina, and engaged a vetturino, with a wreath of roses in his hair, to take us back to Padua; and we moved on by the shores of the lazy Brenta, past the old wall built by Antenor, I know not how many years before the birth of Christ; and talked for five long hours, unwearied, of the fair city we had just left.

At Padua we saw more relics than have ever yet greeted our eyes. What think you of the bones of the murdered Innocents, the body of St. Luke, and a painting of the Madonna, by the same Evangelist?

“*That*, the Madonna!” said Mùsica, starting and turning away, “the Madonna was not a negress:—*that* could not be the work of St. Luke!”

Violet explained the effects of time on colouring: she said, too, that the Holy Virgin, if not black, must, at all events, have been a dark beauty;—she even hinted that, although handed down, from age to age, as the work of the holy physician, it might, indeed, have been painted by meaner hands. But this last

Fondly, regretfully, as we parted from our systematic deceiver, friend, did we say farewell to all the inhabitants as soon as it was light, before we could conceive why vegetable market, which is not with the dawn. In the "what she was," she con- surface of the water down fair Madonna better." regularly as though begged us to look down a sort Here was a river, covered with an iron grating; neatly and nice bones of martyrs at the bottom of it, might fancy denari for their especial use, to which blessing of ever-treated to contribute. Lombard asked, whether the money was serviceable palate bones, or to the souls which had once animated not at which the man looked most devoutly se-locked.

In the Gran Sala' is the tomb of Livy, guarded, strangely enough, by some Theban figures, brought hither by Belzoni, who was a native of this town.

It was dark long before we reached Ferrara:—we could scarcely even distinguish the outline of the fortified hill of Monselice, and were very nearly overturned into the river Po; as we crossed it, without leaving the carriages, on a raft fixed on two boats.—Once having crossed the river, we were in the Papal dominions, which abound more especially with robbers, beggars, priests, and all sorts of vagabonds.—What a pity that good old Saint Robert, of beggar-loving memory, cannot come to life again, and reign here!—how he would revel in happiness, surrounded from morning till night with the blind, the lame, and the—no, not the dumb; Italian beggars are never dumb.—Elia, I think, should have journeyed hitherwards; he would have known, then, what became

use his pet vagrants, when he complained of
in the metropolis.

was forced to have an escort of twenty
travelling this road last week: the dili-
gently attacked, and all the passengers were
to dismount, and render up their goods and
effects. Not one piece of finery,—not one piece
of merchandize did the thieves spare: they even
despoiled the ladies of their ear-rings, and, it is said,
with a very gentle hand; for in Italy, even the
brigands have a certain politeness of manner, and rob
you in a gentlemanly style.

One girl sat apart from the rest; she did not join
in the clamour of her companions for mercy and
forbearance; but she wept bitterly. The chief ap-
proached her, and, in answer to his interrogatories,
she said, "It is for my mother's picture I shed these
tears! I have left her,—perhaps I may never see her
again; and you have taken her picture from me."

The robber, moved at her artless distress, promised
to return her treasure for a kiss, which, said our
narrator, she right joyfully and heartily bestowed,—
so heartily, that the chief, not to be outdone in gene-
rosity, returned to her all her property!

We traversed the grass-grown streets of Ferrara,
and visited the tomb of Ariosto in the public library.
When his remains were transferred from the Benedic-
tine church hither, they found in his coffin a likeness
of the poet, and a medal struck in his honour. The
likeness is a mere daub, but more correct, it is said,
than any other portrait extant of the poet. On the
reverse of the medal, is a hand depriving a serpent of
its sting. Ariosto wrote satires as well as poems.

The Ferrarese religiously preserve the MS. the chair, and the inkstand of their Homer. Surely there is something holy in talent; for it consecrates every thing,—even every meaner thing with which it comes in contact; and love omnipotent could bow down such a soul as this!

Bettinelli assures us, that Ariosto's lady insisted on his writing a canto of his poem every month; and if he disappointed her, she threatened to shut her doors against him. This then was the power by which he was animated; his days of thought, his nights of sleepless excitement, were caused by a softer feeling than love of fame;—and to the magic influence of a woman's smile, we owe the poetry of the Scott of the south! But he never reveals the name of his mistress. The cover of his inkstand is surmounted by a little cupid, whose finger is on his lip, counselling secrecy. Love was with Ariosto, as with all who have deep feelings and refined taste,—a hidden treasure, an Egeria, not to be shown forth to the world, but to be turned to as a hidden source of sweetness and consolation, when the world without should sting, and wound, and betray.

Changed is the aspect of Ferrara now, silent and deserted its ruined halls and palaces; but we could not tread its haunted precincts without recalling the days of old.

De Berville gives us a long description of a combat held at Ferrara between two noble cavaliers, one of the last lingering remains of gothic barbarity. The Duke de Nemours came to visit the Duke and Duchess of Ferrara, and among other amusements, was regaled with a sight of mortal combat between two Spanish gentlemen, St. Croix and Azevêdo. The

duel was fought, under the very walls of the Duke's palace. Each combatant appeared, attended by a hundred cavaliers. The seconds of the one presented to the other swords and two poniards, for his choice; then felt the dresses, to ascertain that the duellists had no concealed armour beneath them: they knelt, too, down to pray, for victory. Strange superstition, to fancy that such prayer could be acceptable to a God of love! The field was cleared, the herald imposed silence, and the fight began. St. Croix first fell, but even when cast down to the ground, sat up and dealt furious blows, while Azevèdo vainly called on him to surrender. St. Croix made an useless attempt to rise, and fell forward on his face; then Azevèdo raised his sword on high, but suspended the blow for a moment, for the Duchess Anne, terrified, was praying with tears the Duke de Nemours to separate them. But Nemours answered, "I cannot; justice awards the conquered to the conqueror." Then the prior of Messina accosted Azevèdo, and said, "Sir, I know the heart of St. Croix,—he will die rather than yield. I therefore, as his second, surrender for him." Then the surgeons were called to staunch the wounds of St. Croix: he was carried off on a litter, and again Azevèdo knelt; this time it was to return thanks for victory. One consequence of his success was, that the arms of St. Croix were to belong to the conqueror. Azevèdo sent to demand them, but his demand was refused. Wherefore he complained to the Duke of Ferrara, whose sentence was to this effect: that he should send once again to make his rightful demand, and if again refused, that St. Croix should be brought back, ill or well, to the field; that his wound should

be unsewn, and himself abandoned to the pleasure of the victor.

Can any thing be more barbarous than such a sentence, and indeed, than such a state of society? and yet these were the glorious days of Ferrara. This duke was Alfonso the First, Titian's friend and patron, the father of Hercules II. and Ippolito Cardinal d'Este, a second Mæcenæ. These were the days of Ariosto and Tasso, though true it is, that they met with but little encouragement. It is pleasant to turn from contemplating Alfonso's stately court, and Ippolito's literary prodigality, to a softer and fairer picture.

Renée, the virtuous and accomplished daughter of Louis XII. of France, who, in the year 1527, married Hercules II., Duke of Ferrara, brought hither the pure faith and strict practice of the reformed church, which she had learned from good and holy men in the court of Margaret, Queen of Navarre. Hither came, in the train of Renée, Madame de Soubise, Jean and Anne de Parthenai, her children, and Antoine de Pons Count de Marennes, who afterwards married Anne. Hither came for refuge, Clement Marot, persecuted in France by Diana de Poitiers, who had loved and left him. He was appointed secretary to Renée. Hither came John Calvin, and here he sojourned for many months, under the name of Charles Heppeville. We need not be told that the combat, whereof we just now spoke, was the last that disgraced Ferrara's palace. We are sure that the gentle Renée would not endure them. The profligate flatterers of Alfonso's court made way for men of different mould, and Renée, instead of the half barbarous, half magnificent

shows in which her predecessors, Anne Sforza and Lucretia Borgia, had delighted, occupied herself in the education of her children, and in the reformation of manners throughout her little duchy. Although not beautiful herself, she was the mother of that Leonora of whom Tasso sung, and all her children were distinguished for talent and grace. We staid long in the library, looking again and again at some scraps of letters, written, we were told, by the fair hand of Olympia Morata, and also at some prayers, indited for her use by the first martyr of Ferrara,—Fannio of Faenza, who was imprisoned for two years, and constantly visited, in spite of the Duke's commands, by Olympia and her friend Lavinia de Rovere; then we turned for one more look at Ariosto's scribbled and interlined MS., until good Sir Mark's patience oozed out, and he exclaimed somewhat impatiently, "Come away, come away! dinner must be ready. I cannot imagine what pleasure you *can* take in looking at those musty old papers."

"Can you not?" inquired Harry, with a curl of the lip strongly indicative of pity; "then we will depart." And we did depart, but in the evening Mùsica took out a scrap of paper, and she said, "Here is one of the musty papers, Sir Mark, or at least a copy of one of them, which I took this morning when they were talking about all those grand things in the library, which I did not understand;" and without farther preamble, she began to sing Renée's sweet song, composed for her by Clement Marot, when, at the command of her husband, she was forced to dismiss all her French friends from France.

“ Hè Marguerite, escoute la souffrance
 Du noble cœur de Renée de France,
 Puis, comme sœur plus forte que d'espérance.
 Console là ——

Tu sais comment hors son pays alla,
 Et que parens et amis laissa là,
 Mais tu ne sçais quel traitement elle a
 En terre estrange.

Elle ne voit ceux à qui se veult plaindre
 Son œil rayant si loing ne peult atteindre,
 Et puis les monts pour se bien lui estaindre
 Sont entre deux.”

There is scarcely a more delightful character in the records of woman than that of Renée. She would protect the defenceless and the persecuted at all hazards to herself. She would advocate the cause she had espoused, and would not abandon it, even when Hercules deprived her, at the instigation of the bigot, Ortiz, of her children, sequestered her from society, accused her servants as heretics, and, finally, imprisoned herself. She displayed the same firm and uncompromising spirit in her husband's court, as animated her in an after day, when her castle of Montargis, wherein she had sheltered a band of Hugonots, being besieged by the Duke of Guise, her son-in-law, she replied to the heralds, whom he had sent to threaten her with battering her walls with his cannon, “ Tell your master I will mount the battlements myself, and let us see if he dare kill a king's daughter!” Renée was a noble spirited creature, worthy to live, while the world lasts, on canvass and in song; but, doubtless, her name is inscribed elsewhere in more enduring characters than canvass or song can

EVENING THE SIXTH.

The Sea! the Sea! the open sea,
The blue, the fresh, the ever free;
Without a mark, without a bound,
It runneth the earth's wide regions round.

I'm on the sea, I'm on the sea,
I am where I would ever be,
With the blue above and the blue below,
And silence wheresoe'er I go.

I never was on the dull tame shore,
But I loved the great sea more and more.

BARRY CORNWALL.

INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

Ancona.

LIFE, dearest Minna, is a strange theatre, and we ourselves far more changeful than those hired actors who play a new part every evening. We are far less creatures of habit than a mere idler would be willing to allow, and can accommodate our tastes and pur-

suits with marvellous ease, to the scenes among which we are thrown, if we can but succeed in persuading ourselves, that what we do is done at our own good pleasure. As I write, I look up occasionally at a group, who are, for them, strangely employed, but who yet seem wonderfully happy. We arrived here at Ancona, the last continental city at which we shall sojourn, last week, and it would be difficult for you to imagine an abode more destitute of amusement or comfort than the one in which we shall probably remain another fortnight. This morning we were all obliged to run away in the middle of breakfast, because, just as we were meditating an attack on a plate of fresh rolls, a worse than Egyptian torment, in the shape of a volley of smoke, came rushing down the chimney, filled the room in a second, gave us head-ache, tooth-ache, cough; and when, yielding to Angelo's suggestion, we opened the door-window a wee wee space, the cold wind and rain came driving in, and upset every thing. Like poor Lord Ulla, we have been, by turns, smoke-dried and drenched until noon to-day, when the weather, with a caprice in strict accordance with the character it bears in England, cleared up, the sun came dazzlingly forth, and invited us all into the little rough wooden balcony which overlooks the sea. We have engaged a merchant vessel to carry us down the gulf of Venice, and as she is not fitted up for passengers, we have every preparation to make; and the young ladies, whose pretty fingers have never performed work harder than penning a quadrille, or tracing a flower, are busily engaged in hemming coarse towels. Even Emma can thread needles, and turn down; and

Agnes, dear child, finds employment enough in feeding the chickens we have bought for the voyage, and which, tied together in pairs, cannot cater for themselves. It is a pleasure to look up and see them all so busy and happy. May, bending far more assiduously over her plain useful work than she would do, were she manufacturing some endless piece of finery for herself; and Violet, laughing and talking as merrily as though she were not in a most out-of-the-way corner of Europe, with a three weeks' voyage before her. Harry too, has found something to do, although there is not a book in the house, nor a picture-gallery in the town,—nobody to tease, and nobody to caricature. He has taken down an old painting from the passage, which Violet persuades him is a Raphael, and pencils and tints as assiduously as a second Aldovrandus Magnus, handed down to immortality by the pen of Mr. Beckford. *Musica*, is the only idle one, and she leans over the balustrade welcoming the sun, and admiring the bright landscape, and enjoying the "*dolce far niente*," which is dearer to a native of the south than aught besides.

It is a bright landscape that our little rude inn balcony commands:—The noble harbour of Ancona, enclosed to the right by the mole erected by those kings of the olden time, the Romans, somewhat impaired by time; and a little below, but close to it, is the new mole, terminated by a light-house; to the left, the view is bounded by a long line of buildings, houses, &c.; among which, we distinctly perceive the shaded promenade, and the arch of Parian marble, erected in the reign of Trajan, and dedicated to him. The last storm quite cleared the air; the

pretty latteen sails are gliding about hither and thither, bending with every breath; the lesser fishing-boats are clearing away out of the harbour; the larger vessels still rock heavily from side to side, as though old Ocean had not quite recovered from his storm of passion; and far away the sun-light gilds the distant mountains.

The tiny quay, immediately under us, is a scene of perpetual bustle and noise. There are some of the fishermen, in their gay dresses, returned from their morning's work, examining their nets; then come the peasants, with their large flat baskets to buy, and to chaffer; a few steps farther on, a group of washer-women are at work, battering with their wooden spaddles, and scolding;—verily, it would be a puzzle to know, whether their tongues or their arms move with the most energy; then half a dozen idlers looking on, and laughing at them. There is a large vessel, too, discharging its cargo of barcalà, cod-fish dried, till it looks like leather; and girls coming down to fill their pitchers with water, and carrying them away gracefully poised on their heads. Lady Julian, who has been in India, says, that as we come southerly, she is continually reminded of the manners of the East.

St. Roy, who has been rambling about even in the rain, has just returned with a variety of miscellaneous scraps of information. He says, that every street in Ancona is a hill, and many of them reached by flights of steps cut in the rock. The town is surmounted by a fortress, also built partly of the rock. The churches are stuck with papers, on which death's heads and cross-bones are painted, and inscribed with "Pregar per l'anima

del Signor Conte, &c. With regard to the history of the place, he can tell us only that it was built by a band of Syracusan patriots, who, to avoid the tyrannical sway of Dionysius, settled here B. C. 400. It was supposed to be, like Paphos, a favourite resort of Venus; and there was once a temple here, dedicated to her. Of the terrible sieges Ancona has sustained, history has often been eloquent; and the place seems so strongly fortified by nature, that I should think famine alone could reduce it.

And now that I have told you all I know of this place, I will give you a few words,—do not be alarmed,—only a few, touching those we passed through on our route hither. At Bologna, we heard, of course, Rossini's music performed by five blind musicians,—visited Rossini's house,—ate Bologna sausages, and slept under domed roofs, ornamented with carved work and paintings. We also visited, as a matter of course, the church, in which Charles the Fifth was crowned; looked at Cassini's meridian, traced on the pavement; and stared, as all orthodox travellers are bound to stare, at the leaning tower. But the Academy!—oh yes, it does one good to gaze on the gems of art, to commune, as it were, with them, who, little valued, perhaps, by their contemporaries, are now the world's wonder and delight. We look not only on lovely and graceful forms, but we have an insight also into the mind of the artist; we revel also in the love-haunted solitude of Raphael; acquire new ideas of grace and tenderness from the Magdalenes of Guercino; and look on the sublime conception of Guido Reni as embodied in the Crucifixion, with strange mingled feelings of reverence and

love, and sorrow ; which, it may be, we have never before experienced. And can we come forth again into the world with thoughts as frivolous, and hearts as cold as heretofore ? Ah no, for awhile, at least, the impréssion lasts ; though, like all the sweet influences of our better nature, which visit us in dreams and in hours of lonely musing,—it fades too soon away.

As we travelled on from Bologna to Cesena, all the statues, marble steps, and columns were well matted to preserve them from the cold, which made them look odd enough. The increase of beggars and thieves to be remarked in the pope's dominions is really surprising, in spite of the pope's summary mode of executing justice. Two who robbed the English mail last week, on the road between Rimini and Ancona, were taken, beheaded, and their heads were stuck on the trees by the highway,—not a very pretty prospect from the carriage window ! Cesena is famous for a yearly fair, and the road was lined with peasantry flocking thither. Their dresses were always picturesque, sometimes quite elegant. Boddices of all colours, neatly laced and embroidered up the front ; petticoats yellow, blue, or red ; a veil gracefully thrown over the head and bust, and a gold cross fastened to a black velvet, composed their attire. Some were on foot, others riding, laden with fowls, eggs, &c., and even with articles of household furniture ; now and then the procession was varied by a cart, or by one of the little selfish car-like vehicles, just large enough to hold one person—a fierce-looking, mustachioed, and cloaked personage of the higher class, whose dignity, however, does not deter an old woman occasionally

from jumping up behind, and clinging, like a cat to a cage, awhile for the sake of a lift. Then came wag-gons laden with thieves, and guarded by gens-d'armes ; —though manacled and linked together, they looked perfectly indifferent ; nay, some of them were singing, and laughed and held out their hands for alms as we passed, although they are condemned to the galleys for life. We were all glad when they had passed, and then came the interesting little republic of S. Marini. Marin was a mason, who, in the third century, busied himself for twenty-eight years in repairing the port of Rimini. At the end of that time, he retired to a mountain solitude, and practised the devotion, though not the austerities of a hermit. His fame spread abroad ; the princess to whom the territory belonged, gave him the mountain as a domain for ever, and Marin, instead of building a convent, became the founder of a flourishing little republic. The mount is about six miles round ; the city is built on the summit, and contains about five thousand inhabitants : it contains also, three castles, three convents, and five churches. The city is often enveloped in snow, while the inhabitants in the plains beneath are suffering from heat. Nevertheless, they have good vines. The city is accessible only by one winding road : the laws prohibiting strangers, and even inhabitants from entering by any other way, are very strict. The history of this little mountain-stronghold, offers neither brilliant conquest nor advance in civilization : fifteen centuries have passed over the heads of these children of seclusion, and have left them as simple, as ignorant, and happy, as they were in the days of

Marin! They have enjoyed fifteen ages of peace, of content, and of liberty, while every other state in Europe, has undergone more or less of change.

At Rimini, we passed under an old arch with broken pillars, dedicated to Augustus Cæsar. Rimini is the Ariminium of Roman history, and was the first town that beheld Cæsar in arms against his country. After haranguing his troops on the banks of the Rubicon, he rushed forward, and at day-break appeared, surrounded with his cohorts in the forum at Rimini. Rimini is now but an irregular dirty-looking Italian village; yet some of us looked on it with feelings of interest, almost as deep as would have been called forth by imperial Rome herself. Cæsar and the Rubicon! Why, there is a power in the names to consecrate, which would invest with dignity the veriest brook,—the veriest hamlet in Italy! We sought, but, alas! in vain, for traces of the castle in which Francesca,—Danté's sweet Francesca,—lived and loved; not a stone of the abode could be identified, as having been her father's residence. However, Harry sketched an old fierce looking fortress castle, anciently inhabited by the feudal lords of Rimini, and declares he will show it in England, to all his sentimental young lady-friends, and swear with as good a grace as he can, that it has been hallowed by the presence of the poet, and of his patron's fair daughter.

Ravenna, too, ancient and dismantled as it is, was to us all redolent of beauty and poetry. At Ravenna Danté was sheltered by Guido Novello, and at Ravenna Danté died; at Ravenna, Danté's daughter, named after his first love, took the veil

in the convent of St. Stephano del' Uliva, and in the same place Danté was buried. Guido, who had protected him in life, pronounced, himself, his funeral oration after his death, and well has his faithful friendship been requited. If there be aught worth possession in fame, Guido's daughter has come down to us, a sweet yet melancholy picture, enshrined in immortal verse. He, who had known the fair creature, blooming in innocence and gaiety beneath her father's roof, touched her errors, but touched them so slightly only, as to add the charm of sorrow to that of admiration,—to make us forget our censure in our tears.

Ravenna! In the pine woods of Ravenna Boccaccio lingered, and there he imagined that fanciful tale of the spirit-lover, who frightened the daughter of the Traversari into matrimony, almost against her will. It is a wild fiction, that of Guido, and her whose beauty and cruelty caused his death: nevertheless, it invested the dark forest with an interest of its own, and some among us there were who bent so attentive an ear, as we skirted along in the pale moonlight, that almost we fancied to hear the hoarse sounds of the hounds baying, and the fugitives shrieking in the distance.

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At last, after a few days of great bustle, and two of perfect idleness, during which all our luggage was embarked, and our only amusement was watching the same, a fair wind arose and we set sail. I can give you but a faint idea of our first day on the wide waters; it was a new scene to us all, excepting St.

Roy and Mùsica;—they for their sins, have voyaged in a little merchantman before. First of all, there was the ingress, very difficult for us, but infinitely more so, for an unfortunate horse, whom St. Roy chooses to take as a present for an old friend ; the string that was fastened round the poor creature slipped to its throat when about half way between the boat and the ship, and the animal was suspended midway in the air. “Stop, stop!” cried the Italian groom, “she tumble in *mare*.” “No, no,” roared the captain, “he’ll be hanged, by Jove!” Poor Carman did, however, escape his double death this time. As soon as we had cleared the port, the pilot left us, and the Italian rowers bending gracefully, set up a loud huzza, which was heartily returned, you may be sure, by our English sailors, who do not like to be outdone in noise. Dinner was served on deck, although it was quite a supererogatory ceremony ; and Violet’s Swiss lady’s-maid, who has never seen a larger space of water than the lake of Geneva, and did not anticipate the pleasures of the sea, amused us excessively ; for she walked up and down with a face indicative of deep despair, clasping her hands, and exclaiming, in a really tragical tone, “Ah, mon Dieu ! mon Dieu ! et moi qui aime tant la soupe !” Then the noises!—chickens screaming, turkeys gobbling, men swearing, ropes creaking, children grumbling ; the vain attempts at sleep, the reiterated questions of “what’s o’clock ?” and “how is the wind ?” rain pattering ; wind howling ; going below for shelter, and coming up stairs again for fresh air ; with dreadful anticipations of coming night. How will it be possible to pass twelve hours in the close cabin !—Of

the cabins themselves,—pigeon holes rather,—it would be vain to attempt giving you a sketch. Dismal, dark, hot, crowded beds perched up on shelves, which you may scarcely climb into without endangering your neck, and which, when once you are in them, give you an excellent idea of limbo, inasmuch as you can neither move hand nor foot: and if prompted by curiosity or anxiety, you do raise your head to see how the world wags without, bang goes your forehead against a hard wooden beam. I would have all who fret at minor miseries, take a voyage in a little merchant trader down the Adriatic, in the month of January;—we do not know what *ennui* is. For three days and three nights, the winds roared and the rain poured, and we of course were all in momentary expectation of going down. Even exhaustion could not bring sleep, for the noise of the men's feet running about overhead: the screaming voices, vainly trying to overmaster the storm; the sea roaring and tossing about, now and then pouring in through the port-hole; the distant bellowing of the thunder; the violent plunging of the vessel, with the low creaking sound, that seems like her dying agony; altogether formed a concert of sweet sounds, which were anything but soothing. The storm arose in the middle of the first night, and the first indication I had of it, was seeing every thing on the table and on the drawers, which they had not had time to secure, quietly walk off, one after another on to the ground;—cups and saucers, books, candlesticks, clothes,—away they all went, as if suddenly endued with life! Even the lamp, which Violet had had lighted, intending, innocently enough, to sit up and read all night, followed, and I leave you to guess

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the pleasant consequences to our goods and chattels. But the worst of all was, that all this annoyance was for nothing ; for on Munday morning we were farther from our place of destination, than on Thursday night. Sir Mark, who was heartily tired, wished to put back for Ancona, but this the captain refused to do.

After the tragedy came the farce.

The first consequence of quieter weather, and recovering health, was a general clamour for dinner. A boiled turkey was brought into the cabin, and Giuseppe watched his opportunity when the vessel, after a violent roll, poised for one moment on her side, to make a desperate attempt at carving. How the legs and wings at last were disjoined, will ever remain a mystery ; and how he contrived, staggering at every step, to hand it round, is quite a secret ;—knives and forks were, you may be sure, quite dispensed with. May was delighted : she sat on the bench opposite, looking very hungry, with a wing of chicken in one hand, a potatoe in the other, her plate on her lap. She had not yet tasted a morsel, when, lo !—a sudden shake—down went the plate, smash ! and stooping to pick it up, she let the potatoe go—away it rolled to the far corner of the cabin ;—before one exclamation had time to escape, came another jolt !—stretching out her right hand mechanically, to save herself from a tumble, away went the chicken after the potatoe, leaving the hungry victim minus a dinner. But the worst of all was, that at that identical moment, the captain's kitten came in, and holding undisputed right over all waifs and strays, she seized the morsel, and setting herself up exactly opposite poor May, began devouring it with a face of

most wicked exultation. Griselda surely never tried to eat her dinner in a storm at sea.

All this is very trifling to relate, dear Minna, is it not? but I wish to give you an idea of our enjoyments by sea, as well as by land. A picture, you know, would be but half complete without the minor touches.

After the first four days we were able to go on deck, and then came the delight.

It is happiness enough for me, with the delightful feeling of restored health, to sit on the deck and watch the sea in calm or in storm. The bright, the beautiful, the ever-changing in aspect, yet ever the same in reality.

How many claims on our sympathy has the sea which the green earth cannot boast! Over it we have watched our loved ones depart and come,—we,—after the lapse of years, to the spot which witnessed the parting agony; and there is the bright track still unchanged which they pursued.

Is there a corner of earth sacred to memory and to regret?—Pass a short time, and let us come to visit it, and change has been busy: flowers have grown, and weeds have arisen, and dead leaves have fallen; man, with his power to destroy, has been busy! Alas! we may not distinguish even the grave wherein our treasure lies, from the common earth around! But the sea, the boundless, the unchanging, is the same now as it was a thousand years ago! Yes! I love old ocean in the calm, when the waters are smooth and transparent as the sky they mirror, when the sea-bird stays his rapid flight to look on his pictured semblance,—when the fresh air blows cool

and pleasantly, and the little wavelets leap up laughingly to meet the warmth of the bright sunbeams! I love old ocean in the storm, when his dark waters heave up to the sky in moving mountains, when the waves come toppling and foaming on like winged destroyers, and the ship itself, a dark speck, tosses up, and anon down, in the very depth of the black abyss, and the very heart lies still with dread! It is one thing to read in carpeted hall and green bower descriptions of storms at sea—it is another thing to be in them: to feel the excitement, the hope, the fear; to be drawn, as it were, to the very brink of death, and as suddenly rescued by an unseen hand, manifested in the stilling of the troubled waters,—in the calming of the fierce winds. Can the life thus perilled, and thus rescued, be ever afterwards all frivolous? Shall the images of beauty, of grandeur, and of desolation, then impressed upon the heart, pass away, and be utterly forgotten?—like the strings of a lute that are once touched to harmony, and then sleep for ever!—like the cloud passing over the bright sky, which is seen no more!” Ah, no! some portion of worldliness we must lose, when thus brought into contact with the sublimest scenes of nature.

Then, too, our days are never monotonous. To-day we pass an island called Pellagossa, a desolate speck in the ocean, on which a watch-tower and one dwelling house is built. One man dwells alone there, and he is stationed on it to prevent any one from landing, lest they should communicate the plague from Asia to Europe. What a history might the mind of that man furnish! Alone; from

sunrise to sunset, no sight to meet his eye save the Illimitable, and now and then a far off sail;—with what intensity of interest would he watch its progress and disappearance! No sound to meet his ear, save only the accents of his own voice, and the deep moan that is never hushed;—then the stir and strife of the elements, the spray tossing almost to his humble dwelling, the yearning after kindred looks and kind voices,—the dread of death! I asked, but could not ascertain, whether the lone watcher were a criminal reprieved from merited punishment,—surely the utmost severity of the law, were mercy compared to his doom!

The next object that came to vary our view, was a rock called Poma, shaped precisely like a ship in full sail; and on the evening of that same day, we were forced to put into the Bay of Drino, and hang out a flag for assistance, but nobody came. Sometimes it is so still, that we can assemble round the table and trace our way on the chart, and read, or sing together. Another clear morning shows us the Albanian and Neapolitan coasts at the same time; but, most of all, I love to watch the sun set, and the moon rise, at sea, even at the risk of being called—a missy young lady. It is a perfect delight to walk up and down the deck and watch her first peeping over the distant mountains of Greece, like a little round ball of fire, and then advance over the sky, becoming, as she moves on, larger and paler, while the sky itself grows lighter on her way, and, one by one, the bright stars disappear before her, and we turn to watch the fire-drops glitter and twinkle, and disappear in the dark depths, like moments of happiness gleaming

through uncounted days of sorrow and weariness unspeakable.

While within sight of Vallona, we spoke a brig, which has been thirty days coming hither from Ancona; contrary winds; squally weather—a pretty prospect for us, especially with the fear of starvation before our eyes, for our last turkey has made his last dying speech; and Harry says, that this is a case in which the poet's favourite wailings over "the last—the very last," may be very legitimately poured forth.

§ I know not a more delicious hour in life, or in time, than the twilight hour at sea. The bustle and noise of day are hushed, the sailors are all at their evening meal, the sky has exchanged its brightness for a tenderer hue, and the tossing white foam sleeps; the sea is at rest, and the silence, broken only by the monotonous splashing of the waves, and the long, low whistle of the helmsman, has a character of depth and tenderness peculiar to the hour. Sacred is that hour to all pure, and holy, and loving thoughts! Then we lean over the ship's dark side, and, as we move on imperceptibly, memory wanders over the past with movement as gentle, and calls back the images which lie enshrined among our secret treasures,—too cherished, too fondly regretted, to be drawn forth in the bustle of the world, or in the glare of day; then we shed, unknown perhaps to ourselves, the tears which we are too shy and too proud to shed when mortal eye is upon us.

The climate as we advance becomes delicious,—so soft and genial the air seems. We have all left off wrappings and cloaks, and generally have cushions

spread on the upper deck, and there take up our abode for the long glorious day. The water is now quite calm, and the movement of the vessel seldom exceeds a gentle rocking from side to side; we read, and talk, and work; sometimes even, Violet will sketch a ruined village on the coast, or a rock in our way; the children amuse themselves with fishing, though they have not yet caught either a flying fish or a shark; and, I during these last few days, have scribbled all this griffonage for you.

Our helmsman is a Greek islander, with whom, I suppose, St. Roy has had some former acquaintance, for he is everlastingly talking Romaic to him. One day, after they had been conversing with more than usual earnestness, we rallied him upon it, and asked if old Pietro had been making him the confidant of any of his own most interesting piratical adventures.—He said No, but that he had been listening to an Island legend. Of course, we all clamorously demanded a repetition. A story at sea is of value inappreciable; but he put us off for the time being, and, indeed, just then dinner was coming up; but some among us determined to attack him again.

Last evening we were all in our accustomed drawing-room, that is to say, on deck, watching the sunset;—we had just entered a seeming bay, and the scene exceeded in loveliness all that painter ever imagined. As we advanced, the opening by which we had entered became less and less perceptible; at last, it was lost; we were surrounded, aye, quite surrounded by mountains,—some near, some distant; still there appeared no outlet; the nearer covered with trees, others blue and purple;—in the distance and

towering above all, the snow-capped hills of Greece. Then we turned a point of the rock, and there, buried among the hills, close to the sea-shore, was a little quiet village, ruined by Ali Pasha, still and isolated as though it were a village of the dead ; and the sun was setting. To the right, a high mountain,—the base washed by the sea,—and coasting along under it one little white fairy bark ;—the summit lost in the clouds, one large purple cloud resting upon it : farther off, a long low line of pale blue hills, and on them the sun had fixed his evening throne, and retired behind clouds of gorgeous splendour,—such as we never see in the North. The dim dark foreground admirably set off the magnificent masses of golden light, varied by little flying clouds, crimson clouds, with a narrow fringe of gold ; even the opposite horizon was tinged with a bright blush ; and, on the sea, was one long line of radiance.

Our talking had long been hushed,—Mùsica had sung until she was weary : it was just the hour for a history not altogether of the world, worldly, so we reminded St. Roy of his Grecian legend.—“While you idlers,” said he, “have been doing nothing this last fortnight of fine weather, I have been catering for your amusement, and have thrown my old Greek’s story into a metrical form.”—It cannot be related in plain prose, so be indulgent.—“Nay,” he continued, smiling, “on such an evening, when sky and sea are so bright, and even the winds are hushed, you cannot dare be otherwise.”

A LEGEND OF THE ISLES OF GREECE.

I.

WHEN first my gaze fell on her, she was young
 And beautiful;—but yet she did not wear
 That maiden charm, by poets fondly sung—
 The eye that laughs—the step that treads on air—
 The radiant smile, all free from thought and care,
 Of a glad girl;—for she did fondly bend
 Over her first-born boy, as he lay there,
 Crowing and laughing, while deep love did send
 Flushes o'er her pale brow, with its pure white to blend.

II.

Her cheek had once worn rose-like bloom; but now,
 'Twas touched by nightly watching, and her long
 Dark hair was bound unbraided round her brow;
 Her voice, once cheerful as a glad bird's song,
 Sunk to a whisper when she moved along,
 With stealthy pace, where the boy slept; her eye
 Had lost the lightning of its glance,—among
 The dark lashes, tears you might espy,
 Waked, not by grief, but by a mother's extacy.

III.

We have fair sights in this fair world of ours :—
 A lily trembling on her footstalk frail,—
 A sunbeam dancing upon forest flowers,—
 The deep wave trembling to the planet pale,
 As, hushed the thunder storm and calmed the gale,
 Forth, with her one fair star in beauty pale,
 She rises over distant mount and vale :
 These sights are fair; but far less fair than one,—
 A mother, trembling, smiling o'er her first-born son.

IV.

Aye ! there he lies,—and helpless, as he seems,
 Has waked new worlds of feeling in her heart,
 With light, unknown before, her eye now beams,—
 New hopes, new joys, into existence start.
 Her own !—her very own !—a living part
 Of her own life :—henceforth she dwells alone,
 Nor thinks a thought, nor dreams a dream apart
 From him whose breath hangs trembling on her own,—
 A world—a living world for her, and shared by none !

* * * *

V.

I saw her in an after year.—All trace
 Of gentle beauty and of love sublime
 Had passed. Each speaking feature of her face
 Was changed all utterly ;—ye t not by time,
 Was it despair, remorse, or was it crime,
 The scathe, its darkness o'er her soul had cast ?
 'Twas like a land within a torrid clime,
 Which blooms at morn—but, by the simoom's blast
 Withered,—shews forth at night the spectre of the past.

VI.

Grief is man's heritage. Whether it come,
 With soft and stealthy step, and day by day
 Wither Hope's morning flowers, till from the gloom
 Of this dark world we would fain pass away,
 And rest :—or with the momentary play
 Of the fierce lightning flash, in sudden rage,
 It dries life's cooling fountains, whence we may
 Draw some sweet drops, its sorrows to assuage,
 Or slow, or swift it comes ;—grief is man's heritage.

VII.

Ah me ! 'Tis sad to look out on our fair
 And lovely world, and see all meaner things
 Fulfil their end of life ;—while man, the heir
 Of all creation, sullenly, coldly flings
 His peace away. His own imaginings
 Are dark and lonely,—ever fixed his eye
 On some far distant object, which ne'er brings
 Content. E'en I, who thus blame others—I,
 Would fain lie down, in utter weariness, to die !

VIII.

For I am tired of life ! And what is life ?
 It is to place our hopes on things that change ;
 Or if one heart be found, of beauty rife,
 Loving and true ;—which time cannot estrange,
 Straightway it dies, and leaves us on to range
 Thro' the wide world,—a wilderness of gloom,
 Where faces meet our own, all cold and strange,
 And we turn from them, sickening, to the home,
 Where Love and Hope lie buried in their early tomb.

IX.

On to my tale. The Countess Nina stood,—
Her hair dishevelled,—her pale lips apart,—
Her tearless gaze bent low, as tho' she would
Gaze life and soul away, ere forced to part
With her life's treasure. Oh ! the human heart
Has such deep power to suffer !—else had burst
The mother's, as she looked upon the ground, where low
And pale in death her boy reclined,—her first,—
The smiling child, whom, in her springtime, she had nurst.

X.

Had he but fallen in the battle strife,
She had scarce grieved,—death had been glorious there !
It was not so. His young and joyous life
Had fallen beneath the assassin's deadly spear,—
The minion of a noble, dwelling near,
Whose path in love the boy had crossed. A smile
Of conscious triumph still sat on his fair
And open brow. No thought of fear or guile,
Had armed his hand against the midnight murderer's wile.

XI.

Softly she knelt, and fondly she did wreath
Her fingers in the curls that lovingly
Clung round his brow ;—it may be they did breathe,
Of days long past, when at his mother's knee
He knelt, a babe, and lisped his Ave Marie :
She felt for his heart's throb,—but all was still !
In sooth, it was a piteous sight to see.
She rose, and murmured one deep word, which still
I hear. " Revenge !"—it was a sound the blood to chill.

XII.

There is a river* in the Scythian land,
 Whose flowing waters for a time are sweet;
 But moving downwards to the ocean strand,
 A little fountain comes its course to greet :
 Henceforward all is bitterness. Oh meet
 Emblem of life ! at first that fair appears,
 Till one dark sorrow comes with noiseless feet,
 And flings its poison o'er our after years,
 And bids us every day embalm with bitter tears.

* * * * *

XIII.

I saw her yet again. And she did stand,
 The widowed sovereign of her own fair hall,
 Where countless vassals knelt ; at her command,
 Ready to fight,—to conquer,—or to fall,
 For her, the mistress and the queen of all.
 Yet 'twas not love that caused them bend so low,
 Whene'er by chance the countess passed them by ;
 For she was changed, and on her once fair brow
 Sate stern resolve and purpose, all unchanging now.

XIV.

Her dwelling was a rude and shapeless pile,
 Where all in vain, the eye might seek to trace
 Or fair design, or finished arch or aisle,
 Or carved tracery ;—but in their place
 Were massive tower, deep strength, and ample space :
 For as each generation rose to life,
 Rose wall and roof, the ancient hall to grace,
 And, fitted but for times and scenes of strife,
 It stood,—unlike our castles old, of beauty rife.

* Hypanis.

XV.

If Art does little for the Island-Greek,
It may be that he wants her succour less,
Whose simple wishes,—simpler wants bespeak
A mind unhurt by luxury's excess;—
Who deems it quite enough of happiness,
To sit beneath his vines the live-long day,
To fold his arms for sleep at night and bless
His God, for casting thus his pleasant way
'Mid the world's garden vales, where murmuring waters play.

XVI.

Oh, fair are they—those islets of the south,
Where the light olive waves her graceful bough,
And o'er each craggy cliff of form uncouth
The golden treasures of the orange glow;
Where myrtles fling their coronals of snow,
In the dim wilderness of rock and tree;
Where soft at eve the spicy breezes blow,
While far beneath, all faint and drearily,
Murmurs the moaning music of the deep blue sea:

XVII.

Where, ever when some lovely height you gain,
Smiling o'er vale, o'er sea, and woodland fair,
You may espy a white and lowly fane
Shining like moonlight through the foliage there,—
A sweet and lowly nest,—just meet for prayer,—
Above the world,—where gathering up apart
From troubled dreams of earthly joy and care,
You may bid every meaner thought depart,
And hold deep silent commune with your secret heart.



XVIII.

But not for all these fair and lovely things
 Did Nina care.—Alas ! grief has sad power
 To sear the senses and dry up the springs
 Of pure and innocent pleasures. The sweet flower
 Of the wild heath,—the song at noontide hour
 Breathed from the sea when all else is at rest,—
 The hymn by moonlight sung in trelliced bower,—
 These things unto the light of heart are blest,
 But are unheeded by the soul with grief opprest.

XIX.

There came a festival at last. 'Twas long
 Since mirth had on that lonely mansion smiled ;
 And loud was now the chorus of the song,—
 Plenteous the viands the vast board that piled—
 Sparkling the luscious wines that, undefiled
 By tasteless water from the fount, once more
 Shone in the goblets.—Men of dark and wild
 And untaught nature, raised them high and swore
 Fealty to her, who ruled the land and banquet o'er.

XX.

One end of the rude festal board was graced
 With seven goblets of the purest gold,—
 An ancient household rite, and they were placed
 For Nina's sons. There was a story old,
 How won they were, by lance of baron bold.
 It was well known, six sons were Nina's now.
 The guests gazed on the cups : their number told
 For whom the seventh ! could it be ?—many a brow
 Look'd down in dark disdain and with fierce glance, where low

XXI.

A boy reclined,—a pale and silent boy,
Of lofty brow,—the lady's minstrel page,
His ebon lute betrayed his soft employ ;
Yet does no tale of minstrelsy engage
His deep thoughts now.—A flash of sudden rage
Illumes his dark eye, as he meets their frown.
Then his low birth, weak arm, and tender age
Crowd o'er his memory,—bow his spirit down.
He leaves the hall, and goes to shed his tears alone.

XXII.

Aye ! bitter are they,—those hot tears that fall
In the bright days of life's delightful spring,
When the young heart, untutored by the thrall
Of the vain world, looks out, and fain would fling
Its wealth of love on every living thing.
To feel the blighting glance of cold disdain,
Falls chill on the heart's warm imagining,
To know our treasured feelings all in vain—
Aye ! bitter are they then, the tears that fall like rain.

XXIII.

We learn in after-time that friendship—love
Bloom like the cistus for a summer day ;
We learn to fix our hopes on things above,
And draw our love from the false world away ;
But still, youth's morning dreams, how bright are they !—
Worth all the after hours when we must deem
Life's rainbow tints as false and fair as they ;
And Truth on earth—at best, a waking dream ;
And Life—the first illusion fled—a tideless stream.

XXIV.

Then monarchs of a fairy world apart,
 We learn—with tears, we learn to dwell alone.
 Oh ! journeying through life's waste with joyless heart
 How oft,—when looking on some valley lone
 And sweet,—or listening to the twilight tone
 Of dreamlike music,—we look back and sigh
 For the lost days, when echoing to our own
 One voice—one smile went softly wandering by,
 And we !—we dreamed not it could ever change or die !

XXV.

We mourn for them—the loved—the lost—the changed,—
 We mourn for them, but for ourselves still more ;
 We feel—all sadly feel—our heart estranged
 From what it was in blessed days of yore !
 A shattered glass—that never, never more
 Shall give back smile for smile, or frown for frown ;—
 And we—careless to what we prized before,
 Shall coldly answer to Affection's tone,
 And never, never love again as we have done.

XXVI.

The Countess entered—with her sons around
 Her proudly moving, and in truth they were
 A goodly band,—of Græcia's holy ground,
 Fit denizens,—for all were brave and fair,
 Yet none so fair as him,—the lost,—who, ere
 His manhood's dawn, had passed from life away;
 At least, so deemed the mother's heart, as there
 They met her proud yet mournful glance, while they
 Mingling among the silent guests, prepare to pay

XXVII.

Due courtesy to all.—The banquet passed
As it should ever pass with the light hearted ;
And when the merry guests were hushed at last,
The Countess rose to pledge them ere they parted.
Guido !—not here !—and twenty vassals started
To pour the red wine forth,—while she, upon
Her eldest boy, a glance of meaning darted.
“ It is the accustomed hour,—Renzo, my son,
Arise ! our daily custom must not be foregone !—

XXVIII.

There was one seat beside the lady's couch
Unfilled—one empty plate was there,—one vase
Unhallowed by the red wine's generous touch,—
All, mute memorials of other days,
Voiceless, and yet most eloquent ! Oh, raise
No dirge to him whose memory yet may boast
Place by the hearth !—Up rose they all with gaze
Bent on that couch,—with arm in air uptost :
They spoke—each separately,—not one word was lost.

He cannot forgive,—we will not forget,—
One of the dark race lingers yet !—
Ne'er shall the light of beauty's eye
Awaken in us or smile or sigh ;—
Ne'er shall the myrtle coronal
Be twined for us in bower or hall ;—
Ne'er shall our country of Nina's band,
Claim the service of red right hand ;—

No home for us, on land or on sea,
 Till the last leaf fall of the withered tree.
 Be it his to hide, and ours to seek,
 In forest, dell, and o'er heather brake;—
 Be it his to flee,—ours to pursue,
 Beyond the verge of the horizon blue!
 We claim a curse for us and our line,
 If ever our vengeance we do resign,—
 If ever our brother we do forget,
 While one of the dark race lingers yet!
 May summer's sun and winter's showers
 Bless other vineyards—never ours;
 May cooling breezes never blow,
 May sparkling fountain never flow
 For us; and when life's toils are past,
 May earth deny a grave at last,—
 If our sabres be sheathed by night or by day,
 Till the last of his race hath passed away!"

 XXIX.

Meantime, poor Guido! he had wandered on
 Through tangled underwood and coppice green,
 All heedless of his path. He reached anon
 A fairy spot; the opening trees between,
 By the tall cypress darkly sheltered in.
 It is a mournful tree; yet as it grows
 There, where all things of earth and air are seen
 So brightly tinted,—it is like repose,
 To look on the cool shade its dark high foliage throws.

XXX.

Through this sweet spot, a tiny streamlet gleaming,
Filled the rich air with music's softest tone:
On the green bank were thousand flowerets dreaming,
Lovely, nor all to mortal eye unknown;
For there, too, stood a bower — a dwelling, lone
Yet beautiful! Aye, Guido knew it well,
And knew its virgin habitant. Anon,
A richer music mingles with the spell
Of the fair stream; upon his heart like balm it fell.

SONG.

Twilight is shedding fast
Beauty o'er tower and tree,
Day, and day's toil is past,
Mother, I come to thee!
Here, here, are votive flowers
Fair as thy own fair brow,
And culled in those cool bowers,
Where the pale roses blow.

With but one prayer I come,—
And thou didst sigh on earth,—
Vengeance dwells in our home,
Blood rests upon our hearth!
Oh, bend thy dove-like eye
On hearts to fury given,
And shed o'er them who sigh
For blood, the peace of Heaven!

XXXI.

“ Guido! thou here — and listening to my song!
 Why leavest thou thus the noble and the gay?
 My mother will look for thy lute ere long,
 And chide the recreant page who steals away
 From board and hall, in maiden’s bower to stray.
 Why camest thou, brother?” As her voice he heard,
 The boy sought, but in vain, the blush to stay,
 Which showed the deep emotion it had stirred:
 “ Call me not brother, Helene!—that is not the word.”

XXXII.

“ Call thee not brother, Guido! Hast thou not
 Loved and caressed me from our earliest years?
 Have we not, hand in hand, by fount and grot,
 Wandered for hours?—and have not smiles and tears
 Been ever shared between us? Where uprears
 Her head the cypress, wove we not the fair
 Chaplets of violets?—and when eve appears,
 Do we not kneel, whispering the same low prayer,
 Raising our hands together to the Virgin there?”

XXXIII.

“ Call me not brother,” he again replied.
 “ Thy brothers — they are nobles of the isle,
 I am of low degree, — and in their pride
 They point at me, and with a scornful smile,
 That turns my blood to bitterness the while,
 They call me indolent. I cannot bear
 Their tales of blood, their songs of war and spoil,
 Their thirst for vengeance. Helene! may I dare
 Unfold to thee — Is it a footstep passing there?—

XXXIV.

"'Tis but the breeze sighing among thy flowers.
Helene! thou knowest that when a lisping child
Thy mother found me in her vine-clad bowers,
Left there to die alone,—thou know'st that, wild
In her deep passionate grief, then new, she smiled
Upon the orphan, and that, since that day,
Strong in her hate to the dark race defiled
With her child's blood, no earthly power can sway
Her mind to peace, save her own orphan minstrel's lay.

XXXV.

"Helene! thou know'st the deep and terrible vow,
That, day by day, her sons have sworn for years.
Nay, weep not — turn not from me, dearest; thou
And I have ever lived apart, with fears
And hopes our own — sometimes with tears,
But this is over now. Thou know'st the name
Of the condemned one,—for but one appears
To have escaped,—Naranza! word of shame.
Helene! that one and thy own Guido are the same.

XXXVI.

"Last eve, a stranger to our hall drew nigh:
I met him wandering the vineyard near;
He was my father's slave in days gone by,
And told me all the tale. He brought me here
Years since, to screen me from their search, and fear
Had given good counsel. Far and wide they sought
And recked not that to share their household cheer,
To dwell by their own hearth I had been brought.
This is not all. The slave risked not his life for nought.

XXXVII.

“ For in his hand a dark red vial gleamed.
 He gave it me; that of my murdered race
 I might avenge the many deaths, and gleamed
 His eye with fury, as he said, ‘ Efface,
 At one fell stroke, the shame, the dire disgrace,
 That rests upon thy name — the dead’s deep cry
 Unheard, unanswered !’ Turn not thus thy face
 Away in anger, Helene ! Look, — the dye
 Of the dark draught, floats harmlessly thy foot-prints by.

XXXVIII.

“ But I must leave thee ! Never as of old
 Could I breathe forth thy mother’s twilight song ;
 Never again dare I her smile behold.
 I cannot dwell with fettered heart and tongue,
 The murderers of my father’s sons among.
 Farewell to all ! Once more at midnight hour,—
 Once, for thy sake, whom I have loved so long,
 I will revisit this fair shrine and bower,
 And pray the Virgin there, her gifts on thee to shower !”

XXXIX.

Farewell !—that strange, sad word, too sad for tears,—
 Grief of all griefs that in the heart’s depths lie !
 Could we look through the weary, weary years,
 And see how, day by day, young hope will die,
 We should not wake to words the parting sigh :
 We speak it in our youth. Youth is the token
 Of all fair things for manhood’s destiny
 An after hour comes on — the spell is broken,
 And the heart swells and throbs, but not one word is spoken.

XL.

She rose ; she flung herself upon her knees ; her hair
Fell round her like a veil ; o'er her bowed head
She raised her clasped hands in deep despair,
And few and broken were the words she said.
" Guido ! am I not thine ? Oh ! who will shed
Light o'er my path of life when thou art gone ?
No wild so barren, and no cave so dread,
But 'twill be home with thee — with thee alone !
Leave me not thus, all desolate, Guido, mine own !"

XLI.

He raised the girl ; — of hope he could not speak ;
He knew he left her then and there for ever !
And he had heard, how oft young hearts will break,
When forced from their first fondest hope to sever.
He spoke no vow of constancy, for never
Had he yet dreamed of life from her apart ;
But low he bent : " Helene, when life's long fever —"
Again the leaves' low rustling made him start :—
He turns ; she is alone, with her own breaking heart !

XLII.

Night came. Night,—holy night ! and lovely showed
Her aspect in one small high turret room
Of Nina's castle. 'Twas the lone abode
Decked by her brothers for their bud of bloom,
For well they loved her. 'Mid the wrath and gloom
Of their wild hearts, to all soft feeling closed ;
Like the " lone lamp that trembles in the tomb,"
One spot, sacred to nature still, unclosed,
And there the image of the gentle one reposed.

XLIII.

Rich velvet hangings from fair Genoa's loom,
 Clothed the high walls with darkest Tyrian dye;
 The air was redolent of sweet perfume,
 Won from the garden bowers of Araby.
 And, standing a carved Indian table nigh,
 Was a Venetian mirror, set in gold;
 The very floor was rich with broidery,
 While high in air—of antique Grecian mould,—
 A silver lamp shed light—most radiant to behold.

XLIV.

But where the goddess of this gorgeous shrine,
 To which so many lands have tribute paid?
 Her flowers—neglected in their vases pine,
 And mute her lyre on the divan is laid.
 There is a dim recess,—lost in the shade
 Of the dark hangings,—it but holds the fair
 And pictured form of her,—the holy maid,
 The Virgin Mother. Who is kneeling there?
 Helene! all sorrowful—the image of despair.

XLV.

And thus she invokes the pictured face:—
 “What, not one look of love, Madonna mine!
 Thy lamp is duly trimmed, and here I place
 Fresh gathered orange-flowers upon thy shrine.
 Bend, bend on me one look of love divine,
 Grant me one pitying smile, that I may know,
 If thou wilt let thy light of mercy shine,
 On the dark path of him, who, sad and slow,
 Sets forth this night, to wander thro’ a world of woe.

XLVI.

“ Still not a smile !—Ingrate—tho’ I have been
Thy servitor so long thro’ good and ill :
Ah, pardon, holiest ! if my words be sin :
I hold thee dear,—but he is dearer still.
I will away,—the hour is dark and chill,
It must be almost midnight,—I will try,
To bend thy other semblance to my will,
The lady of my bower !—for fain would I
Win down for him one guardian watcher from on high.”

XLVII.

The night *was* dark and chill.—Enough to stay
The heart’s quick pulse. One star shed forth its pale
Light o’er the murky sky,—and like the lay
Of a lost spirit, came the wind’s low wail ;
Yet, with brave heart, the girl went on her way,
And when the solitary star on high
Shone out, she blessed its palely beaming ray,
And deemed some guardian spirit in the sky
Looked down upon her path with kind and pitying eye.

* * * * *

XLVIII.

Change we the scene. Take we a slight survey
Of other room in that same castle hall.
No foreign gauds stand here in rich array,
But blood-stained sabres lean against the wall,
And strewn about—ready at constant call,
Lie yataghan and spear, and murderous bow ;
While fierce of mien, with eye which might appal,
On battle field, the heart of bravest foe,
Two chiefs sit on a rude stone bench, in converse low.

XLIX.

" I tell thee Renzo, mine it shall not be,
 To do the deed thou nam'st. *I* never stole
 Meanly on the boy's hour of secrecy,
 Listening to learn the secret of his soul.
 I too love vengeance.—Where live thunders roll
 In tented field and o'er the battle plain,
 Thou know'st that in the vale of Carmagnole,
 Six valiant brothers by this hand were slain.
 I cannot kill the boy, who by our hearth has lain.

L.

" Then mine the task !" was Renzo's quick reply :
 " I too have loved that boy.—Aye, more than thou
 Might'st dream of ;—but no wailing coward cry
 Shall teach me to forget my daily vow.—
 My life-long dream !—Oh, how our mother's brow
 Will kindle, when I bid her kiss the bow,
 Wet with the life-blood of that hated race !
 To realize the darling hope I go,
 And thou—from their closed eyes soft slumber chase,
 Convene them in the banquet-hall, fit meeting place."

LI.

The chief arose, and over him he threw
 His dark capote, and carelessly he shook
 Back his long waving curls ; then forth he drew
 His yataghan.—" Ah no ! I could not brook
 On the boy's dying agonies to look."
 So he replaced it in his crimson belt,
 And from the wall his bow and arrow took.
 He tried the cord,—the arrow's point he felt,
 And forth he rush'd, as fearing lest his heart should melt.

LII.

The night was dark—one solitary star
Shed forth its pale light o'er the murky sky,
All dim and mournful came its gleam from far,
And fitfully the winds came moaning by:
Renzo bethought him of the gnomes who lie,
Prisoned where the Black Mountain rears its head ;
He look'd up trembling to the star on high,
And deemed an eye looked down, yet not indeed
To guide—but to mark out for wrath his midnight deed.

LIII.

At last he reached the bower. Just then the cloud
That had enveloped the pale moon, passed on,—
'Twas but a moment, yet that moment shewed
Where snowy garments in the soft light shone,
And with bowed head, and eyes and hands cast down,
The victim knelt.—Yet lower bent the head,
The hands unclasped fell down,—the prayer was done,—
For in that moment had the arrow sped,
And straight the votary's soul to happier worlds had fled !

LIV.

Thrice blessed they—who, dying at their post,
Have no sad moment to breathe forth farewell !
The sailor on the foaming ocean tost,
The soldier in the field he loves so well,
The votary at his shrine,—*they* do not dwell
With lingering fondness on each long-loved face,—
They do not feel their hearts with anguish swell,
As, looking round the old familiar place,
Each sign of by-gone happy days they sadly trace.

LV.

Alas ! to take a last fond look of all
 That has endeared life's path,—earth's precious flowers,
 The green vale and the gleaming water-fall;
 The blessed sun-light streaming golden showers,
 And more,—the eyes that answering but to ours,
 Have waked and watched thro' all the dreary past,
 With tears for gloomy—smiles for sunny hours :—
 This moment to enclasp the dear hand fast,—
 The next, to take Love's last deep look,—the last, the last !

LVI.

The last on earth ;—but blessings on the faith,
 That bids us look to life beyond the tomb,—
 That strews with flowers the dark and narrow path,
 And lights with love the valley wrapt in gloom !
 Of all the joys we hope in worlds to come,—
 The founts of living waters fair and free,
 The gem-lit thrones, and buds of fadeless bloom,—
 No joy so sweet, as the fond hope that we
 The dear ones loved and lost on earth, again shall see.

LVII.

On went Lorenzo to the lowly shrine,
 And slowly raised the dead. He did not dare
 Look on the victim's cold, cold face for sign,
 How his dark treachery had wrought ruin there ;
 But mournfully his burden he did bear,
 Back through the dim and lonely forest way,
 Starting—how oft ! when the dark shadows there
 Of the old trees across his footsteps lay,
 And trembling—that strong man—at the light breeze's play.

LVIII.

When Renzo reached the hall, they were all there,—
His five brave brothers round the table stood ;
And, half reclining in her ebon chair,
With brow high, stern, and pale, as used to brood
On thoughts all mournful in her solitude,
The Countess sat.—Low bending, at her feet,
Renzo laid down his burden, stained with blood,
The face all closely veiled ;—then, to complete
His task, he rose, and these rude rhymes he did repeat.

“Io, Io, our task is done !
The sword is sheathed—the prize is won !
Mother, let joy light up thy brow ;
None of the dark race linger now.
Now, may the light of beauty’s eye
Beam out for us, with a smile and sigh ;—
Now may the myrtle coronal
Be twin’d for us in the ancient hall ;—
Now, where our country’s heroes lie,
We, too, may fight,—we, too, may die.
We may roam where we will, o’er land and sea ;
The last leaf has fallen from the withered tree :—
To hide that last one they essayed ;
But by himself he was betrayed.
He knelt to the Virgin, but she would never
Breathe blessings on a base deceiver.
Our brother will sleep all sweetly now,—
For we have fulfilled our daily vow ;
And we shall be blest with summer’s sun,—
For our task of vengeance is fitly done

And the breeze will blow, and will not bring
Our brother's plaining on its wing.
When we depart to the blessed isle,
Our brother will meet us with a smile :—
Joy, joy ! for us all,—our sword may rest ;
Our task is done, and our brother is blest !”

LIX.

Up rose the Countess,—and her dark eye danced,
With speechless rapture :—at her bidding, they,
With eager face and hurried step, advanced,
Where low and still in death the sleeper lay.
She raised the veil.—Lightly, as on the spray
Of the rude wave, the snow-flakes trembling fall,
So lightly had death touched his smiling prey,—
So calmly had the child received the call ;—
A flower remov'd to Heaven, 'ere stained by Earth's dark thrall

LX.

Oh, it was lovely !—not a sinless child
Could look in sleep more holy—more serene :
The lips, half parted, still, tho' moveless, smiled,
As if in prayer, the soul had stolen been ;
And none might dream or guess that, from between
The folded lids, the light of life was gone !
Yet 'twas not Guido, thus so fair was seen ;
Not his the face, where death so lovely shone :—
It was Helene ! their own beloved and lovely one !

LXI.

There was a cry,—a low, soul-stricken cry :—
It came not from the Ladye, stern and cold ;
Altho' she prayed that very hour to die,
No sign or word her heart's deep anguish told :—
It came not from those men of iron mould ;
They had nursed, all too long, harsh thoughts that glow
Like fire within the brain ;—thoughts that enfold
The soul's deep sympathies in silent woe.—
The cry was Guido's ;—that deep cry, so sad, so low !
* * * * *

LXII.

I saw her once again,—for the last time.
She was alone,—all utterly alone :—
Her sons had left her, in a distant clime,
By acts of desperate valour, to atone
For the dark deed they had wrought in their own.
They had reproached her, ere they left the isle,
For the sad vengeance they for her had won :
She knew their words were just, and never smile
Henceforward came—her heavy moments to beguile !

LXIII.

But in her hall,—her hall, with ruin fraught,
Her household gods, by her own hand o'erthrown,
She sat, amid the ruin she had wrought,
Childless and sad ;—the unloved and the lone.
Seldom she spoke, and then her words' low tone
Told how her mind, all wandering, did retain,
Of all its saddened memories, but one ;—
That one was stamped upon her burning brain
In characters indelible,—of grief and pain.

LXIV.

She trembled oft,—but it was not from fear :
 There came a storm, and ever as the wild
 Low plaining of the wind struck on her ear,
 With faltering voice, she cried “ My child, my child !”—
 There was a broken lily, and it smiled
 On the deep ravine’s brink ;—she brought it home,
 And of a tear her sadness it beguiled ;
 For while she looked upon its blighted bloom,
 “ My child,” she said, “ e’en thus she blossomed for the tomb.”

LXV.

There is a spot, in that fair Grecian isle,
 Soft, and secluded from the traveller’s eye :
 It shews not where the vine-clad valleys smile,
 But hangs just midway ’twixt the sea and sky,—
 On a torn ledge of the rude rocks, that high
 Frown o’er the waves. Here, when day’s toil is o’er,
 The fisherman, as slow he passes by,
 Homeward, returning from the Grecian shore,
 Whispers his Ave-Marie—while resting on his oar.

LXVI.

There grow two pine-trees ;—none know how, or why,
 Or whence they came ; but high their branches wave ;—
 And, mingling fond their foliage, dark and high,
 They guard, or seem to guard, a quiet grave.
 And there sleep they,—the young, the fond, the brave ;
 Lovely in life,—divided not in death.
 What, tho’ no power availed, their youth to save,
 Most blessed they, to yield their dying breath
 Together, and to sleep the same low grave beneath.

LXVII.

Who would not envy them their dreamless sleep ?
Together, in one pleasant grave, they lie:—
O'er them spring's earliest flowers their fragrance weep,
And the waves murmur their soft lullaby.
Nor is the spot unknown, to every eye,
What time the sun is pillowed in the west ;
And o'er the heath, twilight's soft breezes sigh,
And night-birds sing, and the earth is at rest,
And maidens wander forth with those whom they love best.

LXVIII.

Here, the Albanian, in his white capote,
Leads, trembling, down the steep and dizzy way,
His Island-maiden, to this spot, remote,
And far from the rude sights and sounds of day.
He softly sings the legendary lay,
In her deep-listening ear, of what has been ;
And she strives, all in vain, the tears to stay,
That, thro' her veil's dim folds, are softly seen
To flow for Guido, true and fond, and for his sweet Helene !

You must not imagine, Miuna, that this long history formed the amusement of one night only. I have chosen to send you a copy of it, without inserting the interruptions that occasionally broke in upon the thread of the story; but it did actually last us, until we dropped anchor in the little harbour of Hydra. It was evening when we did so, and the town presented a singular aspect to us. The houses are built in successive tiers, to a stupendous height. Built of the whitest marble, and hanging in the form of an amphitheatre, they have been compared, when lit up from within, to stars of gold on a silver ground. While we were standing on deck in the silence of night, a strain of music arose from the shore; it sounded in the deep silence like the song of unseen spirits, welcoming us back to earth again. With the day-light, came faint sounds on the breeze, of bells ringing, men's voices, dogs barking;—heard at intervals, these noises seemed more like those we hear in a troubled dream, than real sounds pertaining to busy and animated life. It is a strange feeling, like awaking to a new existence, this coming again to populous cities and green valleys. We have so long been shut up in this little vessel together, that we are become as a world unto ourselves; for the life that we have led during this last month of alternate storms and sunshine, has been so perfectly, so entirely different to any former days, that the time has seemed to exceed many weeks passed in an ordinary manner.

Hydra is a mere rock, as sterile as a mass of lava; there is not a tree, a plant, or flower upon it, except such as owe their existence to art. It does not contain a single well, nor has it naturally a handful of

soil, to disguise its barrenness. The inhabitants, opulent by commerce, owe prosperity and happiness to their love of liberty. A few hardy Greeks, such as were wont to be denizens of the holy soil, in the days of Epaminondas and Pelopidas, determined, like another band of Venetii, to withdraw from tyranny; and abandoning to the Turks their fertile homes and fair olive grounds, came hither, and vowing themselves to the rude mariner's life, won independence, and, in process of time, wealth. They are even at the present day, the boldest and most skilful mariners of the south. Few of them can either read or write, but they talk French, Italian, and Turkish, equally well. Wholly occupied with their vessels, there is not such a thing as a road on the island.

Every Hydriote is a sailor, either to command or to obey; the men are constantly abroad, and the women lead a quiet and secluded life. There is one public walk about a mile distant from the city, called Vlicos, where a few Indian fig-trees, vines and olives, peep out among the rocks. Mùsica pointed them out with much pride and pleasure. She also described to us two miniature churches at Vlicos, in which there are two small lamps always burning; and she says, that the women of the island repair thither when a Hydriote vessel sets sail, to offer up prayers and vows for the sailors. She described to us the pleasure with which the whole town is animated, when a ship belonging to the island calls "en passant," on which occasion, the crews are always permitted to visit their families.

Poor child! she is wild with joy herself, at the idea of seeing her brave brothers, and her old white-

haired father once again. She will re-visit the simple and lowly home of her childhood, but, well it is for her, that she is not destined there to abide; for her tastes and habits are changed, though she suspects it not, by her long residence in the more polished cities of the world; and, be it for good or for evil, for happiness, or for misery, she may not return to that she was again. I could not but pity her as she reclined on the couch the last evening we were on board, in a perfect delirium of delight,—too happy to sing, to talk, or even to listen to St. Roy. Poor child! if she should find that the grey-haired old man's memory fails him because of his years and increasing infirmities,—if she should find that the brave brothers have somewhat forgotten the long absent one, and have taken up other interests, and formed unto themselves other attachments and dearer ties, how bitter will be her disappointment, for it will be the first!

And we, too, are about to separate for awhile.—One is going to Constantinople, another to Athens, and the remainder of the party in search, not of the picturesque, but the comfortable, wherein to sojourn for the few weeks that remain to us of winter. We shall be out of the way of posts, and all other landmarks, that indicate civilization; therefore, Minna, you need not expect to receive another packet for some time.

We shall lead a wandering life;—now passing a week at one Greek island,—now at another. This only point seems settled,—that pass the winter as we may, we are all to assemble at Zante in April; and thence to commence our voyage homewards. Our

soirées have proved to us of so much interest, in keeping attention awake, and whiling away the long evenings, and have, moreover, engendered among us such a feeling of good-will and kindly fellowship,—the consequence of a pursuit in common,—that we all promise to continue the plan while travelling separately. Minna, what tales I shall have to tell you, of Turks and Athenians, and of the half-civilized inhabitants of the Egean Sea! Then, again, we shall touch, on our road homeward, at Malta; and at Gibraltar we shall remain a month. It will be odd if we do not pick up something interesting there, particularly as St. Roy and Mr. Dormer talk of exploring inland as far as time will allow. So now, after the fashion of dear old nurse, who used to give us an orange to-day, and the promise of an apple for to-morrow, I take my leave, with one word of advice. —“If you feel inclined to curl your lip, and ejaculate ‘What trash!’ glance your eye once more over Harry’s impertinent motto, which is duly pasted on the outside of our portfolio.” Farewell, dear Minna! my pleasant task is for the present at an end; and if — I will conclude in an orthodox manner,—some pretty words at parting;—if these few pages from the far-off South, have now and then chased the cloud of thought from your brow,—if they have soothed one hour of sickness, or beguiled one hour of weariness, my labour has not been labour in vain.

VALE!

THE END.



